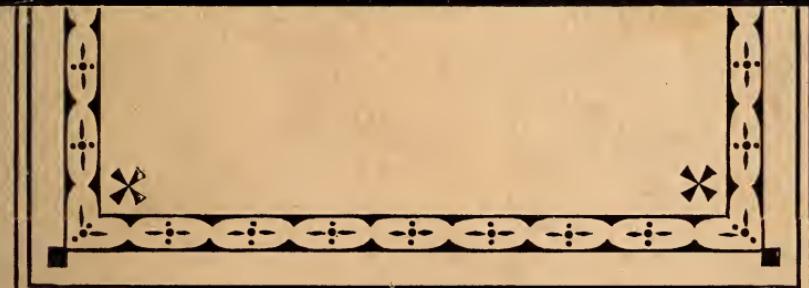


IN THE SHADOW OF HIS HAND

ROSE PORTER



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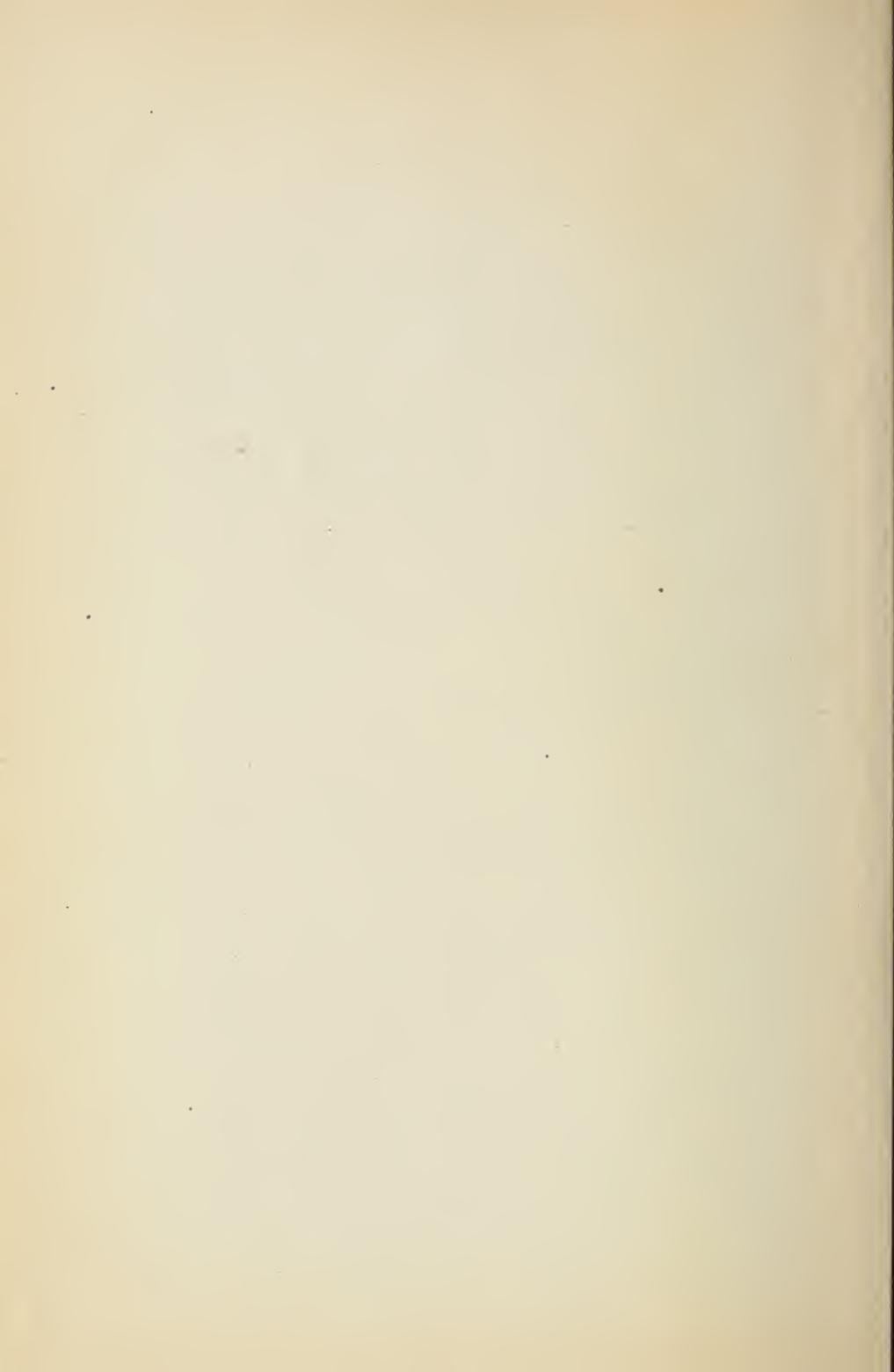
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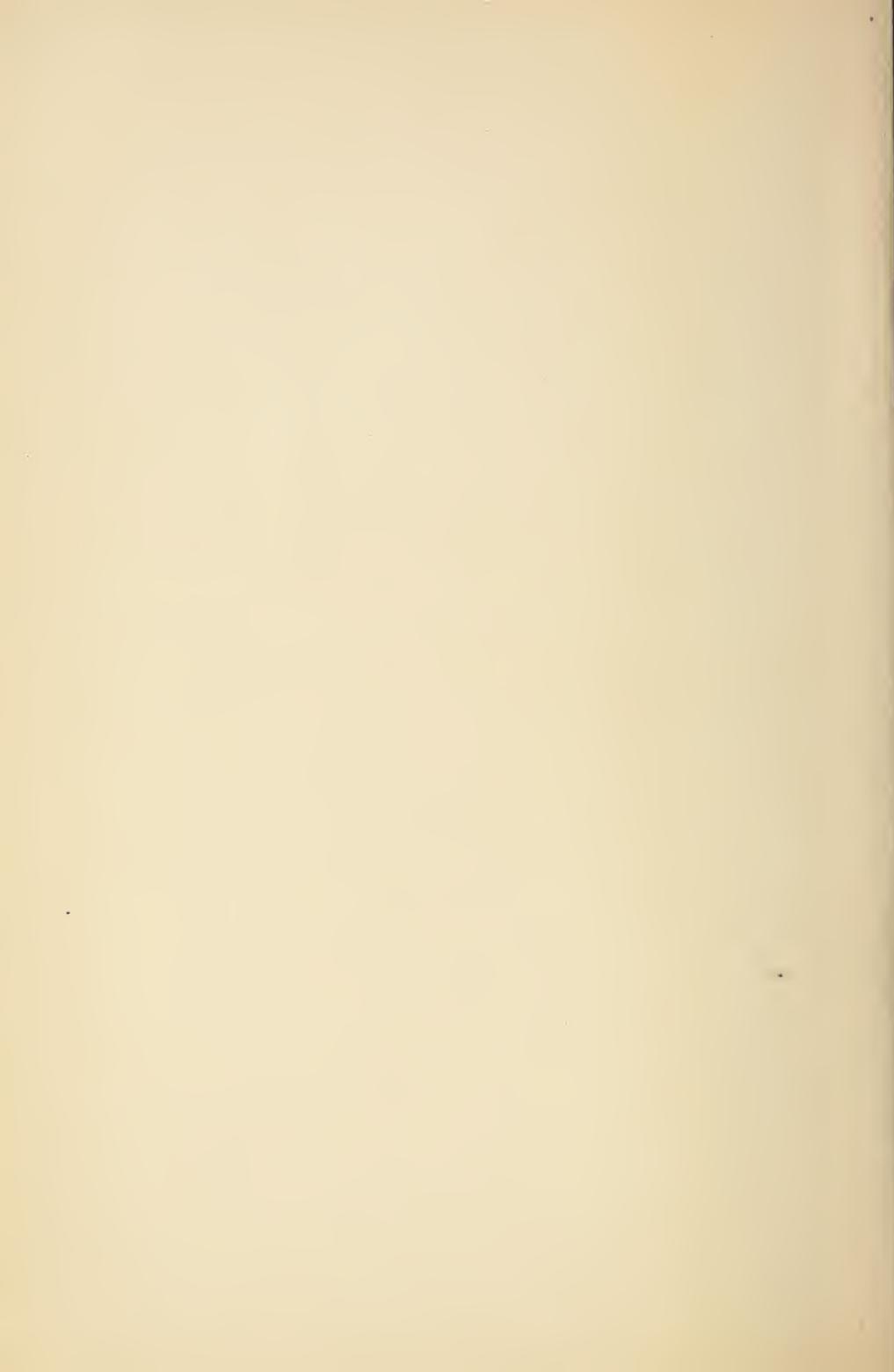
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IN THE SHADOW OF HIS HAND.



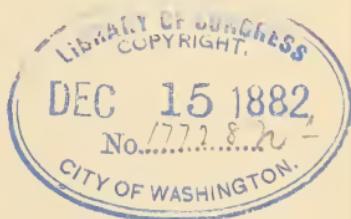
# IN THE SHADOW OF HIS HAND:

## THOUGHTS FOR LONELY HOURS.

BY

ROSE PORTER,

*Author of "Our Saints," "Charity, Sweet Charity," etc.*



NEW YORK:

ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & COMPANY,  
900 BROADWAY, COR. 20th STREET.

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EDWARD O. JENKINS,  
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ROBERT RUTTER,  
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TO MY FRIEND,

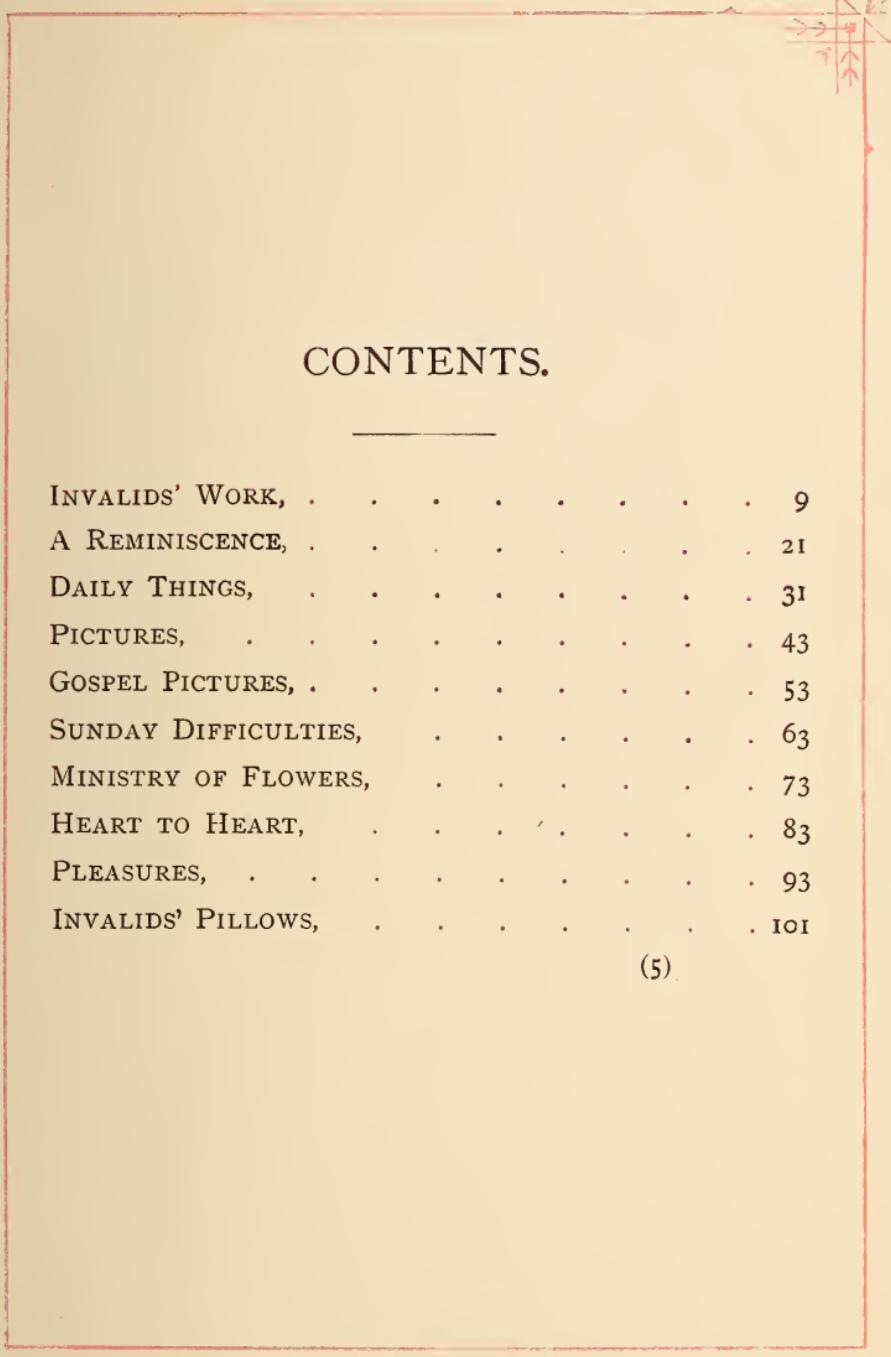
C. T. C.,

WHOSE LIFE-WORK IS TO POINT TO HIM

WHO

FORGIVETH ALL OUR INIQUITIES, AND HEALETH ALL OUR  
DISEASES.

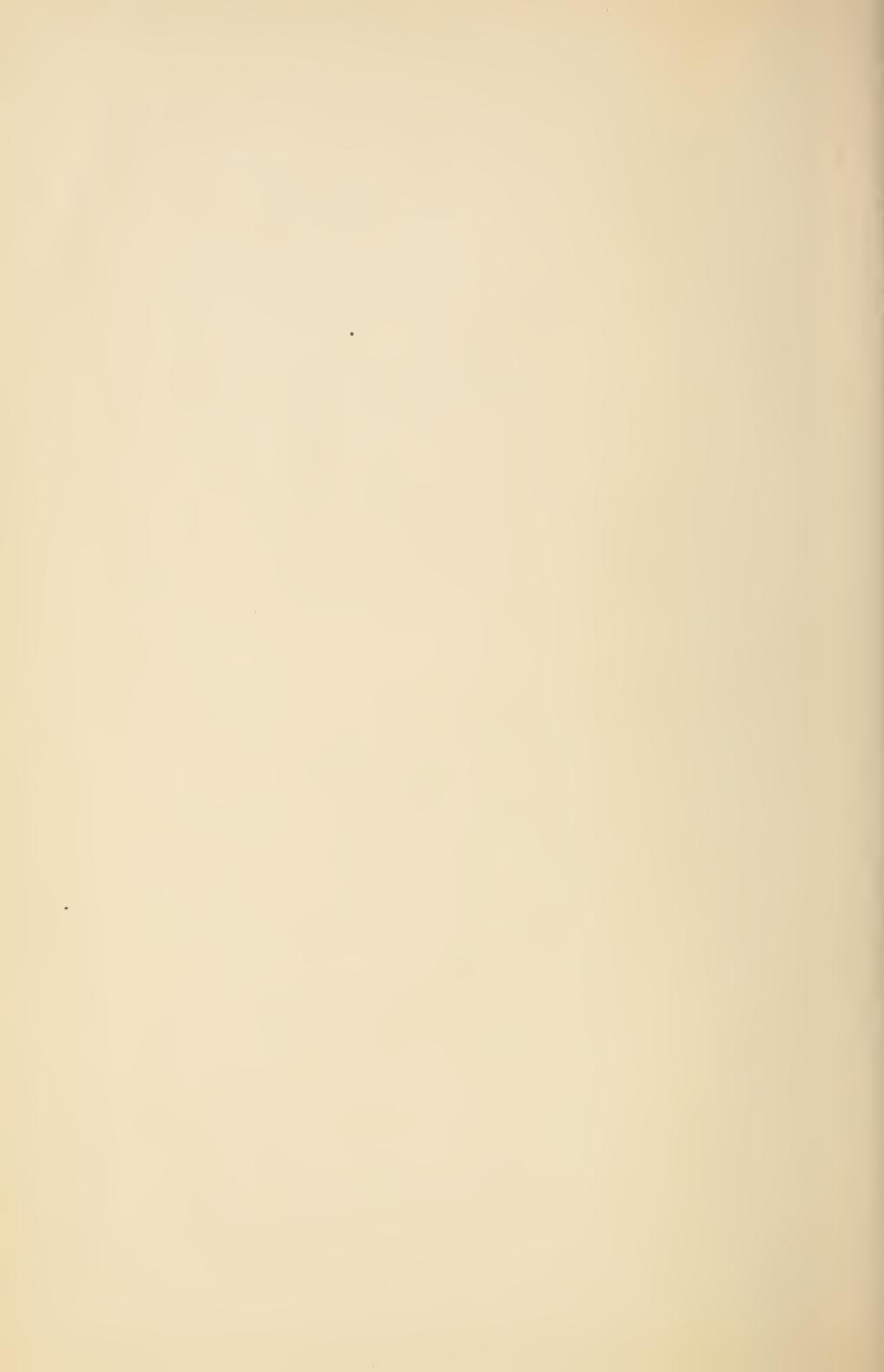




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“So long as we can serve God by activity, let us do so; when the time comes for manifesting Him in weakness or pain by the life of cheerful, dutiful, uncomplaining sonship, let us do so.

“Patience is harder than diligence,—to sit still than to be moving.—Yet the sick-room is often more powerful in its testimony of a faithful God, than a pulpit that sounds forth in sonorous eloquence the message of the Gospel.

“How to use life we can all understand and do. How to meet death, calmly and meekly, is a lesson only to be learnt in one way.”

—“*The Gospel of Christ*” (THOROLD).

“ 'Tis by comparison an easy task  
Earth to despise; but to converse with Heaven—  
This is not easy.”

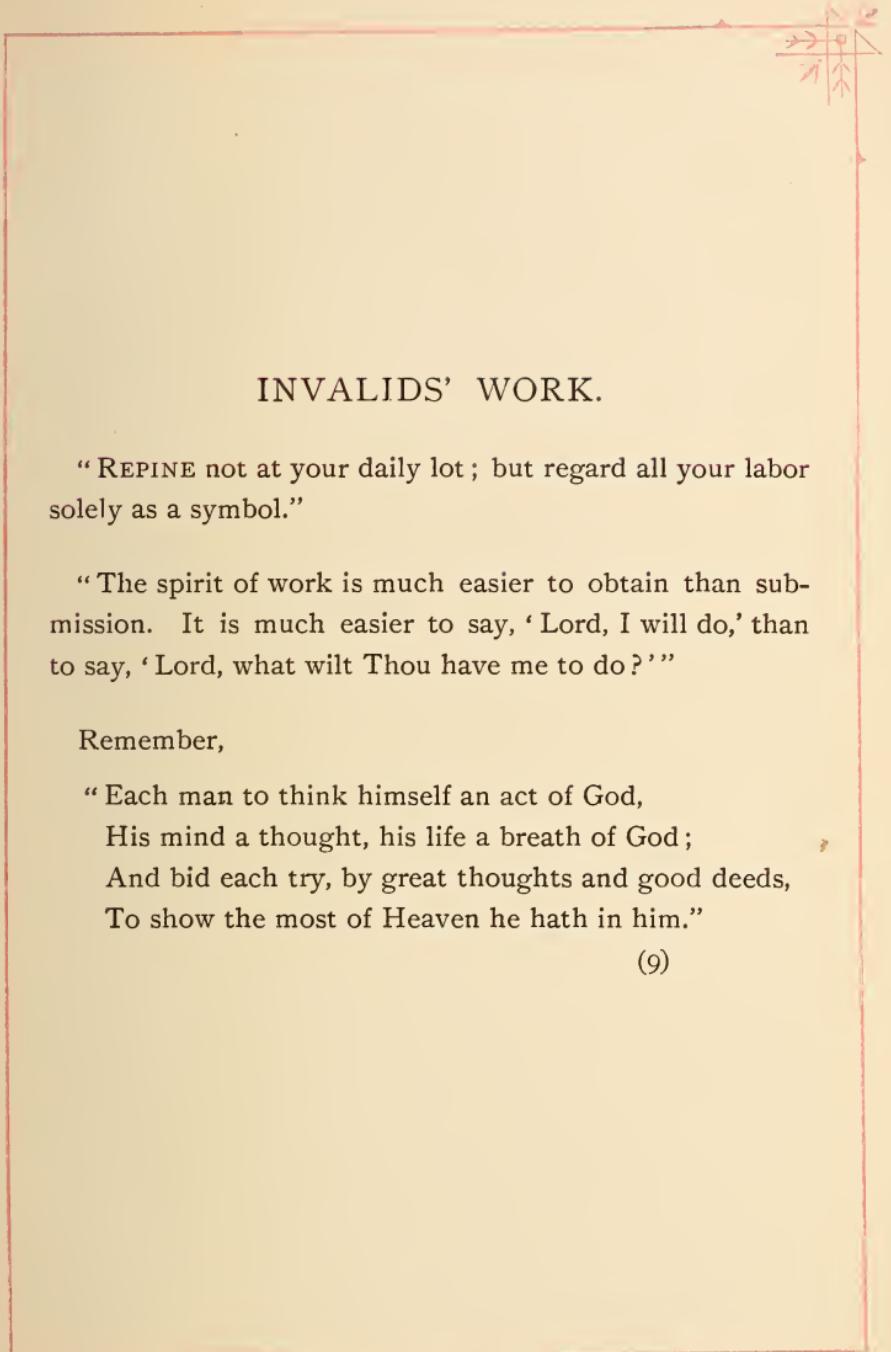
Yet,

“Know, . . . .

Who worship God shall find Him.”

(7)





## INVALIDS' WORK.

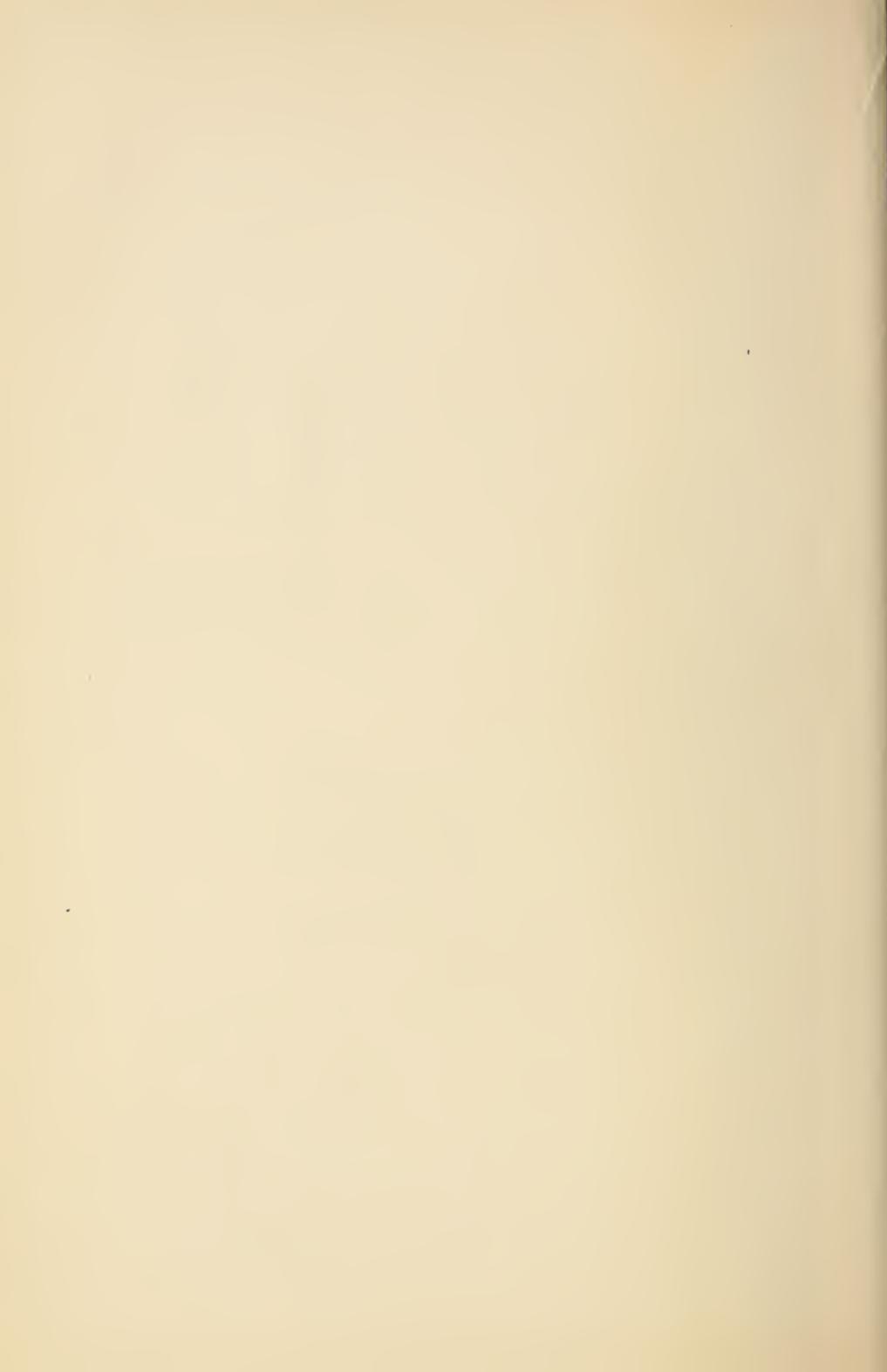
"REPINE not at your daily lot ; but regard all your labor solely as a symbol."

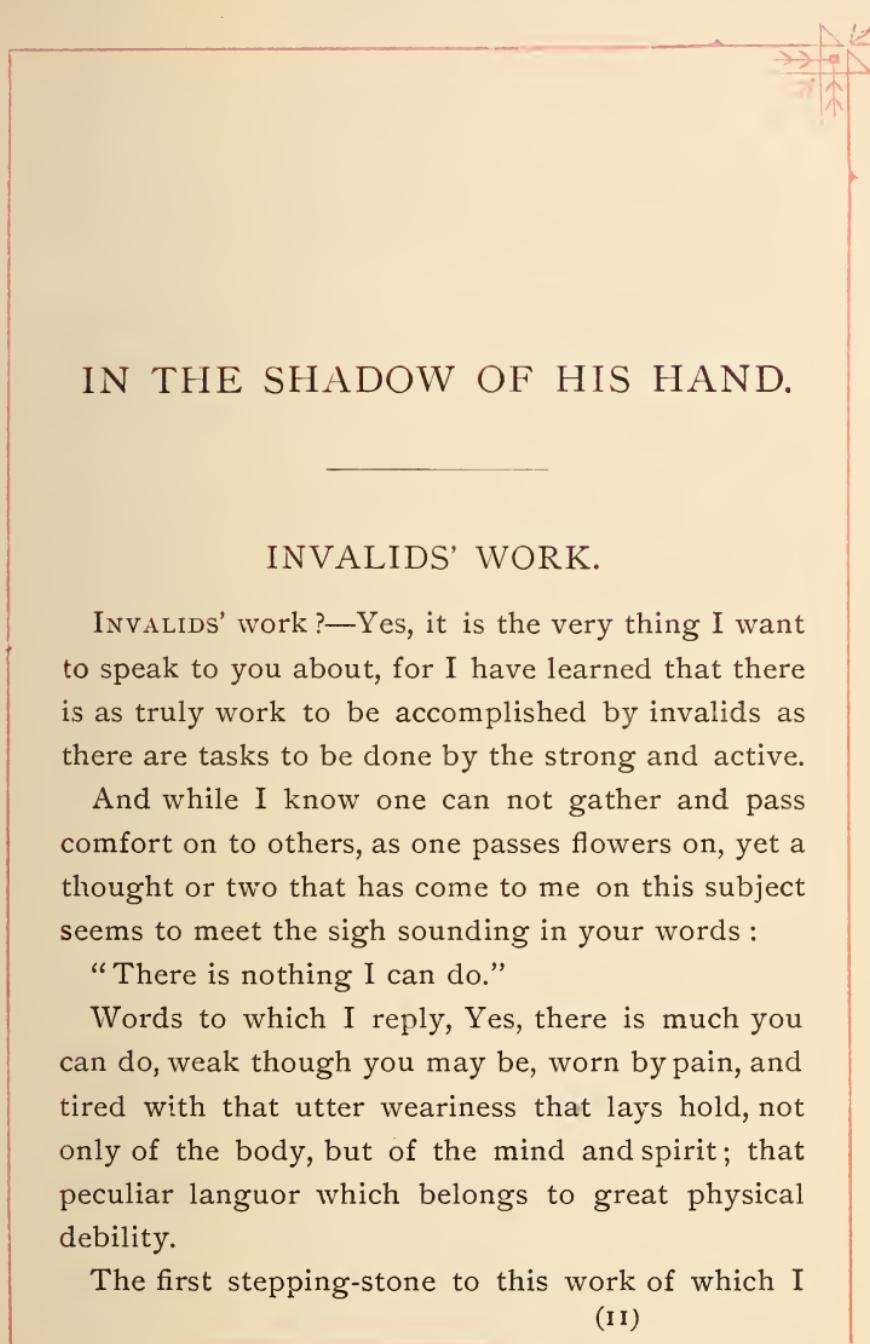
"The spirit of work is much easier to obtain than submission. It is much easier to say, 'Lord, I will do,' than to say, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?'"

Remember,

" Each man to think himself an act of God,  
His mind a thought, his life a breath of God ;  
And bid each try, by great thoughts and good deeds,  
To show the most of Heaven he hath in him."

(9)





## IN THE SHADOW OF HIS HAND.

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### INVALIDS' WORK.

INVALIDS' work?—Yes, it is the very thing I want to speak to you about, for I have learned that there is as truly work to be accomplished by invalids as there are tasks to be done by the strong and active.

And while I know one can not gather and pass comfort on to others, as one passes flowers on, yet a thought or two that has come to me on this subject seems to meet the sigh sounding in your words:

“There is nothing I can do.”

Words to which I reply, Yes, there is much you can do, weak though you may be, worn by pain, and tired with that utter weariness that lays hold, not only of the body, but of the mind and spirit; that peculiar languor which belongs to great physical debility.

The first stepping-stone to this work of which I

tell, I think you will find in the letting go of many a cherished idea of what Christian work means.

For in our thoughts of service we are so wont to dwell "on *doing*, rather than being, and becoming."

So wont to forget that "God's will must be wrought *in us*, as well as *by us*."

You remember those words of Paul's to the Hebrews: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them which are *exercised* thereby."

Ponder well those words, "to them that are *exercised* thereby"—for "there is something very significant in the use of that word *exercised*."

Just here I turn from my own interpretation of an invalid's service, to copy for you a page of extracts from a book that lies open before me, and where I find thoughts on being, by illness, as we are apt to think, "shut out from work for the Lord."

"Sometimes God puts a space between us and our eager activity that we may estimate it truly."

"What we might have *done* suffers nothing from our helplessness; what we may *be* might suffer sorely without it."

"And perhaps we do not enough remember that

God appoints our service, not because *He* needs it, but because *we* need it."

"We need training, and He gives it thus, through the enforced weakness of illness,—through lessons of failure, and, as we think, of loss, and little we know for what it may be the preparation in that restful work of that eternity where His servants shall serve Him."

The learning of patience even in little things that seem mere trifles as we number them, remember, you may make *that* a service, dear F., for "with God there are no small duties, and He would have us ready less to serve Him much, than to serve Him perfectly."

What are these little things?

Every invalid knows,—and yet I continue to copy from the English sister, from whom I have before quoted. She writes :

"Sometimes nothing more than the wonderful things you hear of other invalids, contrasted with your own attainments.—Five years on her back in a darkened room, so that she can rarely work or read, and passes many wakeful nights, and yet she never finds the time long or lonely, as Jesus is always with her.—One loves to thank God for His strength thus

made perfect in weakness ; and yet, if you allow yourself to be saddened by an example so bright, you come under St. Paul's condemnation of those who are not wise."

I think this extract will just meet one of your troubles, dear F. If it does, recollect, if God does not give you *that* strength, all the more need is there for you to tend the plant of faith in your heart, not in discouragement because you fail to attain the exultant emotions others may feel, but because you are trying to submit to His will, even if it causes you to exercise faith in the dark, rather than in the light.

And do not lose out of your service the peace-given memory, that, like the woman of the gospel story, *your* service may be only to touch in faith the *hem* of His garment, while your sister's may be to bathe His feet with the precious ointment of a faith so strong, its odor is like the breath of fragrant incense.

And now I will resume the enumeration of the "little things" mentioned in Miss B.'s book :

" You reproach yourself, and sometimes hear hints from your friends, that you might do more.

" "Look at So-and-so," you hear them say, 'her sofa is the center of a whole machinery. Look at

the letters she writes, at the sums she collects for different objects of charity'; or, 'look at the wonders her needle accomplishes.'"—

As you read of all this, dear F., does impatience and rebellion at your own lack of ability to accomplish your desires spring up in your heart?—If it does, you have encountered a harder work than any task for hand or mind—the work of conquering self-will and "the unsubmitting desire to struggle into activity which God for the present forbids." I continue to quote: "It is hard, too, not to dwell on aches and pains, till they are multiplied, harder still not to give way to that inexplicable dread of possibilities, which is one of the skeletons of invalid life.—If you should be worse—if—if, if! Of course you know the ifs are faithless, but they are very persevering too, and have little insistent voices that will be heard"—

Voice, that only one voice can still,—the voice of Him who said, "Peace, be still." It requires self-discipline, too, to conquer fancies about food, noise, or light.—"They grow and multiply with most furious rapidity, silently gaining ground, which they do not readily give back."

And almost as rapidly, "one glides into the habit of dwelling on and in one's own little world, in-

stead of leaving it to sympathize heartily with others."

We need to labor too, especially in lingering illness, to keep down the "exacting spirit."

"Better, instead of giving way to the imperative 'I must have so-and-so'—to train oneself to say, 'I can do without it.' And it is astonishing of how many things you will learn this to be true, if you steadily put the thought of another's trouble first, and of your own comfort second."

And now a deeper trouble,—you recognize it is not yours to choose whether you do more or less, but "*feeling*, surely, is under control if not action."

"Is it?—To a certain extent, no doubt, and perhaps to a greater extent than we think, but physical causes occasion depression, while they weaken the power to combat it."

Hence all we have to do is to strive against *unsubmissive* restlessness,—the restlessness we may not be able to subdue, and this we and those who love us should remember, for somehow it is such comfort in weakness to have others recognize, what the Lord never forgets, "that we can not be disciplined by what brings no smart."

Do you tell me this work of which I write is all



*spiritual*, and that your spirit seems as unequal for the contest as your body is for physical labor?

Do you tell me, the thoughts you know are true, nevertheless they do not seem real to you?

Well, all you can do is to ask God to make them real,—“ask and ye shall receive,”—it is a Gospel promise.

But you are too weak and worn even to ask, the power of continuous prayer seems gone, all consciousness seems merged in a sense of utter weariness.

Then let your prayer be nothing more than “Looking Up.”—Remember,—“He knoweth your frame.”—

“Speak when you can, and when you can not, remember that He has not need of words.”

You recollect that man of God of whom it is told, that “when laid aside by over-work of brains, his only prayer for six months had been two words: ‘Lord Jesus.’ He could ask for nothing; he could only realize a presence of One long loved and trusted. It was all he could bear, and for the time all he needed.”

“All he needed”—remember that.

And then,—the afterwards to all these days and nights of weakness and weariness, struggle and failure.

Ah, think of the afterwards !

“ Safe home, safe home in port !  
—Rent cordage, shattered deck,  
Torn sails, provisions short,  
And only not a wreck ;  
But oh ! the joy upon the shore  
To tell our voyage-perils o'er !

“ The prize, the prize secure !  
The athlete nearly fell ;  
Bare all he *could* endure,  
And bare not always well ;  
But he may smile at troubles gone  
Who sets the victor-garland on !

“ No more the foe can harm ;  
No more of leaguer'd camp,  
And cry of night-alarm,  
And need of ready lamp ;  
And yet how nearly he had failed,—  
How nearly had that foe prevailed !

“ The lamb is in the fold  
In perfect safety penn'd :  
The lion once had hold,  
And thought to make an end ;  
But One came by with Wounded Side,  
And for the sheep the Shepherd died.

“ The exile is at Home !  
—O nights and days of tears,  
O longings not to roam,  
O sins, and doubts, and fears,—  
What matter now (when so men say)  
The King has wip'd those tears away ?

“ O happy, happy Bride !  
Thy widow'd hours are past,  
The Bridegroom at thy side,  
Thou all His own at last !  
The sorrows of thy former cup  
In full fruition swallow'd up ! ”

*Greek Hymn, 830.*





## A REMINISCENCE.

“THE Infinite Hand behind the clouds gives only the sorrows we can bear.”

“Extremity is the trier of spirits;  
Common chances common men could bear:—  
When the sea is calm, all boats alike  
Show mastership in floating.”

(21)





## A REMINISCENCE.

You tell me you have read my letter on work, but you want something to come closer to the days that now encompass you.

Days during which your only service is to lie still and wait,—and then you quote the words:

“They also serve who only stand and wait,” and you ask:

Are they true? Is there service in *just* submitting to God’s will?

You know my answer. Surely there is,—and yet, by way of proof of this well-known truth, by way of comfort, now that it is *your* service, I want to tell you of one whose life,—because her spirit was pervaded with submission,—became like a praise-note even amid days of keen bodily suffering,—and who, when she told me of the heart struggle it cost before she came to say, “Thy will be done,” added, “I wish I could pass the experience of that night on, for it might help others to know how I came to feel.

“Lord, Thou hast a holy purpose  
In each suffering we bear ;  
In each throe of pain and terror,  
In each secret, silent tear ;  
In the weary days of sickness,  
Famine, want, and loneliness ;  
In our night-time of bereavement,  
In our souls Lent-bitterness.”

And now, bridging the years since Hester Graves uttered that wish, comes your request, and, in reply to it, I give you her story.

She was a middle-aged woman, stricken with mortal disease, brought face to face with the stern fact that the time had come when the kind physician, whose cheery smile and encouraging words had lit up many an hour of dark foreboding, no longer smiled, while in a low voice he told her, “There was nothing left for his skill to do ; it was only a question of a few speeding months before the end must come !” And,—she listened to the words calmly,—she held her hand out, and grasped the physician’s with a firm, warm clasp. But,—she said not a word,—and silently he left her.

Left her to take it up,—to grasp it,—the truth, that her days were numbered !

Strange how dear life is to us earth-dwellers,—



even to Hester Graves it was sweet and precious,—though she was a lonely woman, with no tie of husband or child to bind her to this world. Strange, too, familiar as we are from childhood with Christ's promise, "I go to prepare a place for you," how the heart will shiver at the thought of going out, *out* into the unknown!

All night long Hester struggled to accept, and bow before the physician's verdict with submission, thus she told me—and night,—it is very long to a lonely sufferer.

It was not till the darkness was beginning to fade before the late dawning of a stormy winter's day that she whispered the words, "Thy will, not mine, be done." Six little words,—all very brief, but none the less wondrous words, for never yet did a soul out of need look up and whisper them, but that straightway in response the "angels came to minister."

Thus it was to Hester Graves, and listening to the comfort-thoughts the ministering ones then brought to her, she entered into the peace of Christ's assurance, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," while in her heart thrilled the happiness born of belief in His promise, "Where I am there ye shall be also,—Let not your heart be troubled."

Truly she said, "The thoughts that came to me that night, seemed like blossoms broken from the Tree, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations, for they were every one so laden with balm for my needs, that were many, and complex," and Hester's voice had grown softer, as she continued :

"For fears, they beat in upon my soul ruthlessly as the tide creeps on and up on some low-lying shore,—it is such a lonely experience to know human skill, human aid powerless to help.—

"Trembling and afraid, I lay there in the dark, till Christ helped me to say the words, 'Thy will,'—and then, as by 'His command, Genesaret's storm-tossed waves were quieted, till like a sea of glass the lake lay beneath the rising sun,' so my troubled soul was bathed in peace, and made open and quiet to receive, and hold, the comfort He sent."

Presently she had added :

"Yet something, as a child entering the shadows of a dreary forest at nightfall, clings to a father's hand, *sure* the father's hand-clasp in return means safety, is yet half fearful, still tremulously, I questioned, will my heart fail when I hear the call that bids me enter on the hour of mystery?—and like note of tender mother's lullaby to sobbing child, I seemed to hear in answer a voice softly saying :

“‘‘No,—for

“‘‘From out the dazzling Majesty  
Gently He’ll lay His hand on thee,  
Whispering, “Beloved, lov’st thou me ?  
’Tis I—be not afraid.”’

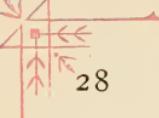
“But my fears were not all hushed, and still I queried, The valley of shadows,—it is so dark,—the river of death,—it is so cold,—and again, like the ripple of summer breeze sounded the voice :

“‘‘Unto Him whose love hath washed her  
Whiter than snow,  
She shall pass through the shallow river  
With heart aglow ;

“‘‘For the Lord’s voice on the waters  
Lingereth sweet,—  
“He that is washed needeth only  
To wash his feet.”’’

Ah, the comforts,—the wondrous comforts born for needy souls out of Christ’s pity, out of God’s love !

Hester’s story did not end with the recital of these comforts ; she went on to tell, how like the blackness of darkness her sins passed in swift array be-



fore her, those things she had left undone, and those things she had done which she ought not to have done, till aloud she cried, "My sins, what can I do with them?" And then, soothing as strains of Æolian harp, had come the answer, "Nothing; Christ has done all; Christ, whose blood cleanseth from sin; Christ, who gives for the asking the white robe, in place of the garment red like crimson."

Other fears, too, had been in Hester's heart; but for every one the Lord gave her a consolation thought, which by faith she grasped,—and, the Lord, He will be as merciful, and tender to you, in your need, if you seek Him,—for,—His name is Love.

And now I have told you enough, for you to look behind, and know the secret of the patient waiting, patient enduring of pain and weariness, that made it so true of Hester Graves, that "they also serve who only stand and wait," enough for you to know, *submission is service.*

And remember,

"Light is our sorrow, for it ends to-morrow,

Light is our death which cannot hold us fast;

So brief a sorrow can be scarcely sorrow,

Or death be death so quickly past.

"One night, no more, of pain that turns to pleasure,

One night, no more, of weeping, weeping sore;

And then the heaped-up measure beyond measure,  
In quietness for evermore.

“Our face is set like flint against our trouble,  
Yet many things there are which comfort us,  
This bubble is a rainbow-colored bubble,  
This bubble-life tumultuous.

“Our sails are set to cross the tossing river,  
Our face is set to reach Jerusalem ;  
We toil awhile, but then we rest forever,  
Sing with all Saints and rest with them.”

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.





## DAILY THINGS.

“WHAT is to-morrow until it comes?”

“Live by the day,—you will have *daily* trials, and strength according.”

“He that has one morsel of bread in his basket, and yet frets for the morrow, is the man of little faith.”

“God’s will in the present moment is the *daily bread* which transcends all substance.”





## DAILY THINGS.

“ARE our hairs numbered, and our *days* forgotten?”

For answer, think of the *daily* things mentioned in the Bible.

Things which belong to the sick and suffering, full as much as to the well and strong. Ponder on but a few of them, dear F., and truly I think you will find what seem but “fragments” in the gathering, will, like the grain of mustard,—which is indeed the least of all seeds,—grow and become trees, so that “the birds of the air come, and lodge in the branches thereof” (Matt. xiii. 32).

Little birds, that always teach the secret of daily peace, for,—“What has God given to the wren?—Content.”—What chirps the sparrow, but the faith-song.

“ He gives us each our portion  
In sunshine or in rain.”

And :

“Are ye not much better  
Than they ?” the dear Lord says,  
“Why, then, are ye so faithless ?  
Trust Me in darkest days.”

Do you remember how Mrs. Browning, “whom England loves to call Shakespeare’s daughter,” teaches the lesson of “rest in God’s goodness” by a bird song ?

“Oh ! the little birds sang east, the little birds sang west !  
And I said in under-breath : all our life is mixed with death,  
And who knoweth which is best ?

“Oh ! the little birds sang east, the little birds sang west !  
And I smiled to think God’s goodness flows around our  
incompleteness ;  
Round our restlessness His rest.”

“Round our restlessness *His rest.*”—Will the *daily things* help to unfold what that rest in God means ?

They do to me, and I think they will to you. I will only point you to six, but if you seek them you can find as many as the rounds in Jacob’s ladder, and every one will lead you a step higher, a step nearer heaven, as every day leads “a day’s march nearer Home.”

First among them, naturally I pause to bid you muse on the ever-recurring daily need,—“*daily bread*.”

“Give us *this* day our daily bread” (Matt. vi. 11). Not to-morrow’s, but *this* day’s.

Every new day a new casting of ourselves upon the care and providing of our Heavenly Father, not only for the food which sustains the body, but for the bread that is spiritual, and that will enable us to accept whatever He sends, be it sickness or health, weakness or strength, as the best thing that can come to us, *because* He sends it.

But I need not linger over these thoughts, for you know, as I do, that this prayer means *much more* than material nourishment, and that “it includes the idea of fitness, adaptiveness, and sufficiency for our souls too.”

Some texts there are that always seem to me like a voice and an echo; it is so with the following: “*Surely* goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life” (Ps. xxiii. 6)—its echo, “Blessed be the Lord who *daily* loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation” (Ps. lxxviii. 19).

I give you no thought of my own on these passages, for I want to copy words that I hold dear;

they are from Anna Warner's "Melody of the Twenty-third Psalm." She writes :

"*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.*—'Surely';—we say, 'perhaps,' 'I hope so,' 'I trust so'; but David's faith goes further, and says, 'surely.'—From all restless cares, from all weary fears, even from all clamorous wishes (a thought that, specially for an invalid to ponder), David had 'ceased':—saying, 'The will of the Lord be done.' Could anything be better than that? Could he lack much, followed by the goodness of the Lord, which 'endureth continually,' and the mercy of the Lord, which is 'to everlasting.'—Not the days of famine—though they might be many; not the enemies of his life and peace; not the valley of the shadow of death itself,—were a dread, with that 'surely.' For who that truly loves the hand of God, fears anything which it may send? 'Goodness' and 'mercy,'—there are no darker names. For all the days of his life, David knew these were sure. And then?"—

It was our Lord Christ who said :

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross *daily* and follow Me" (Luke ix. 23).

"*Follow Me,*"—they are such tender words to

come close after the command to daily cross-bearing.

*“He goeth before,”*—and yet,—Do you say the path is rough, the cross heavy?

Yes, I know it is hard to believe the rough path, the heavy cross, are “His love-tokens.”

But as Phillips Brooks asks, “Have you never found your cross a *lifting-up*? Never found, the everlasting parable of the thorns that made a crown, repeating itself for you?”

Ah! remember when you shrink back from this daily cross-bearing, that “the Lover of souls can make tryst with His beloved ones, and will keep it anywhere, and almost in any manner,—and what matter it, if He be the leader,—if He be the guide”; —what matter if the cross-bearing be “up hill all the way”?

“Trustfully, hopefully, you can rest in the sick-chamber, or lie down on the bed of mortal death, if only He calls you, and leads you out.”

Out, by the gate inscribed, “Follow Me.”

“The winds blow fierce across the barren wild;  
The storm-clouds gather darkly on our way;  
'Tis cold! But, oh, that loving face and mild,  
Which goes before! *There* first the shadows stay;

And tempests reach Him first, our Shepherd there ;  
What He endures shall we complain to bear ?

“ The way is rough, and wearying steeps arise ;  
And thorns are there to wound our aching feet ;  
But, oh, those sacred footsteps, firm and wise,  
Which go before ! They first the roughness meet,  
And briers reach them first ! Oh, shall we dread  
To bear *His cross*—to walk where *He* hath led ?

“ The stream is reached ;—the river dark and cold ;  
The waves are high ! But, oh, that mighty One,  
Who goes before !—the billows o'er *Him* rolled ;  
*He* crossed the water first, and shall we shun  
The final anguish that our Shepherd bore ?  
His hand shall guide us to the other shore.”

“ Day unto day uttereth speech ” (Ps. xix. 2).  
Think of this universal *daily* voice of praise,—  
Nature's praise.—Think “ what wonders lie in every  
day,” and you will have thoughts enough to fill with  
music and sunshine many an hour of physical weariness.

I am always so glad, a man of Luther's rugged,  
somewhat stern nature, basked, as it were, in the  
light of God's *daily* repeated miracle-working power.

“ The world,” he writes, “ is full of God's miracles  
which happen without ceasing ”; and he adds :

“But our eyes must be pure, lest because they are so common to us, they become dim.”

Words that glow with meaning, for it is written, the pure in heart see God ; surely, then, only the pure in heart can read the meaning of the daily miracle of morning and night, bud and flower, sunshine and shadow, and all the wondrous workings of nature, great as well as small ; only the pure “can look at it in entirety, or in its details, beholding in it the harmony of the *word* of God, manifested by the *works* of God.”

Is your heart pure? Can you see within the veil? Can you hear the daily music of “day unto day uttereth speech”? Can you read the meaning of Nature’s “silent parables”?

As every month of the twelve has a special name of its own, so it seems to me every *daily* need has a special grace, that peculiarly belongs to it,—and without exception I think invalids may lay claim to a peculiar need of patience, and hence it may rightfully be called their special grace.

Thinking thus, I give you a verse from Job, to link with the promise: “As thy *day* thy strength shall be,”—spiritual strength for spiritual need, remember,—“All the *days* of my appointed time will *I wait*, till my change comes” (Job xiv. 14).

Patience to wait,—patience to endure,—patience in much,—patience in little,—I wonder if in that prayer for daily bread of which I spoke on another page, this patience,—invalids' patience,—is not largely comprised?

If it is, in among the “daily things” you will find enumerated in the Bible, you can read the words, “A *daily* rate for every day, all the days of his life” (2 Kings xxv. 30).

Why not call this an invalid's promise?

And now I have come to the end of the six daily things I said I would number for you.

Shall I make my conclusion a rosary, even though, then, it must hold fifteen?

Yes, I will, though I will leave you to thread for yourself the gems of daily blessings indicated, for you will know best how to string them, according to your daily needs.

For thought :

“How I love Thy law! it is my meditation all the day” (Ps. cxix. 97).

A couplet of promises :

“That which they have need of—let it be given them *day* by *day* without fail” (Ezra vi. 9).

“ Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed *day by day* ” (2 Cor. iv. 16).

For preservation :

“ I the Lord do keep it, I will water it, I will keep it night and *day* ” (Isa. xxvii. 3).

—Keep what? Faith and patience, I think, in your case.

A blessing for the faithful :

“ Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching *daily* at My gates ” (Pro. viii. 34).

And for the seeker :

“ These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures *daily* ” (Acts xvii. 11).

For the tired :

“ And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the *day*-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm, and from rain ” (Isa. iv. 6).

Even

“ Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and *to-day*, and for ever ” (Heb. xiii. 8).

So

“We may rejoice, and be glad all our *days*”  
(Ps. xc. 14).

For incentive for daily vigilance ponder that question of the mother to Ruth :

“Where hast thou gleaned *to-day*?” (Ruth ii. 19).

But perchance you ask for thoughts of that *Other Day*.

That “*day*, when before the throne of God you shall serve Him in His temple.” For,—you know that “He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him, against that *day*.”

And “may you find mercy of the Lord in that *day*”—and enter “the city where the gates shall not be shut all day,”—and “where there is no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of the Lord doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof,”—*there*, where “there is laid up for you a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give you at that *day*.”

## PICTURES.

“TEACH me, my God and King,  
In all things Thee to see.”

“Night brings out stars, as sorrow shows us truths.”

“Thou may’st see reflected, e’en in life,  
The worlds, the heavens, the ages.”





## PICTURES.

REMEMBER, "we all in large measure bring with us what we see in anything."

Not till we are shut in week after week by the four walls of a sick-room, do we fully know, I think, what pictures may come to mean, and how much companionship and consolation one may almost hourly receive from the prints that hang upon our walls.

This comfort is nowadays brought so within the reach of all invalids, I want to speak with you about it, even though you do not need to be told of the many works of the masters in art, that are duplicated in fair copies, by litho. and photograph.

And yet, have you ever thought how some among these representations of sacred and legendary subjects, seem to claim a special right to the title of Invalids' Pictures?

As I lift my eyes they rest upon perhaps one of  
(45)

the most suggestive, for the sick-room, Ary Scheffer's "Christus Consolator."

Do you know it?—If you do, you doubtless know, too, the tender fact, that it was the picture a daughter of England, widely known for far-reaching thought, but whose faith grew *dim*, because of her much longing for *sight*, desired hung above her mantel, that during hours of suffering she might fix her gaze on the central figure, the tender Christ, the One of all compassion.

As for that parable picture, the Good Shepherd, holding the tired lamb safe in His Arms of Love, I think it would be almost as impossible to number the hints and whispers of comfort and peace it has suggested to the sick and suffering, as it would be to count the daisies on a sunny bank-side of a summer morning.

Think of these suggestions but for a moment, and what a daisy-chain of blessings you have as an out-growth of the one simple line :

"With the sheep, the Shepherd of the fold."

Thoughts that lead by green pastures and still waters.—"I am the Good Shepherd."—"I know My sheep and am known of Mine."—"Fear not, little flock."

But I will not enumerate more of the Scripture comforts that halo this picture, and yet they are many.

I remember so well once placing it before a dying boy,—all through the day his gaze rested on it, and when twilight came, day's twilight,—and life's twilight to that young sufferer, softly he asked :

“Put it where I can see it,—it makes me feel so safe.”

And,—the little lad passed from earth to heaven with his eyes fixed on that pictured portrayal of the Good Shepherd, and the child's heart was at peace, because by faith, he grasped the meaning of the Heavenly Shepherd's promise, “I will gather the lambs in My bosom.”

But, it is not only of these tangible pictures I would speak to you, though I would fain tarry to say, bring into the sick-room not only tender representations of Scripture truths, and uplifting works of sacred art, but bring, too, bits of bright color.

For, sometimes to eyes shut away from seeing the fair world of Nature's loveliness, a sketch,—even though crude in execution and coloring,—will hint a whole summer full of beauty to a home-bound invalid, whose “country-going” is all by proxy.

I must not overlook one more pleasure you may

find, when strong enough, as an outgrowth of tangible pictures.

It is the looking for the many interesting legends, and facts, that cluster as roses on a rose-tree, about almost all paintings by the old masters, and that the seeker can find in the charming "art-books," that have so multiplied in these latter years.

But, after all, dear F., it is the spiritual pictures that are the dearest, and they are two-fold, made up as they are of "Bible picture-bits, that stand out in such bright, vivid coloring so fair and clear." If we pass them by unnoticed, we lose, I think, a part of the heritage which is ours, as the Heavenly Father's children, for I am sure "that Christians who have no care for the speech through which He utters, as in a parable, His own tender teaching—lose more than they know," and made up, too, of memories of the beauty of sky, land, and water-scape enjoyed in the days before the Lord called aside.

Only "*aside*,"—remember, these pause-places marked by illness are, as Ruskin so beautifully says, "rests."

Do you recall the passage? In its completeness it reads:

"God sends a time of forced leisure, sickness, dis-

appointed plans, frustrated efforts, and makes a sudden pause in the choral hymn of our lives, and we lament that our voices must be silent, and our part missing in the music which ever goes up to the ear of the Creator.

“How does the musician read the rest? See him beat the time with unvarying count, and catch up the next note true and steady, as if no breaking-place had come between.

“Not without design does God write the music of our lives. Be it ours to learn the tune, and not be dismayed at the ‘rests.’ They are not to be slurred over, not to be omitted, not to destroy the melody, not to change the key-note. If we look up, God Himself will beat the time for us.

“With the eye on Him, we shall strike the next note full and clear. If we say sadly to ourselves, ‘There is no music in a rest,’ let us not forget, there is ‘the making of music’ in it. The making of music is often a slow and painful process in this life. How patiently God works to teach us! How long He waits for us to learn the lesson!”—

May not one learning of it be the truth that “if memory is possession,” “if we have all that we have enjoyed,” we are to gather up the recollections of

bygone-beheld beauty, and find a meaning in it voiceful for our present need?

The parables of your past seeing! Think of them, and you will find yourself soothed and comforted in many an hour of pain and weariness.

Tell you what I mean?—Well, by way of reply, I will give you a simple example of the comfort and strength to bear present suffering, and its almost harder sister, anticipated suffering, which B. found from remembering just one brief hour-encompassed drive, through a fair prospect land of Nature's loveliness.

But note, she found it, and you can only find it, by accepting the significance of Keble's verse:

“The distant landscape draws not nigh  
For all our gazing; but the soul  
That upward looks may still descry  
Nearer each day the brightening goal.”

I give the story in B.'s own words:

“I knew I was very ill, and yet when the knowledge came to me that the illness might make necessary a remedy, harsh as the use of the surgeon's knife, my heart seemed to stand still.

“Time after time I tried to really say with full submission, ‘the spirit is willing’ to endure if God

so orders; and when at last the Lord helped me thus to say, my 'flesh,' ah! it was so 'weak,' I do not think that *it* submitted. I lay awake one night till close on to morning, trying to accept the future. My pillow was wet with my tears, when my old nurse bent over me and said :

"Do not cross the bridge, dearie, till you come to it."

"But I know it is before me," I replied, half petulantly,—and then, with one of those swift flights of memory, that a word will sometimes start, I was led by that word *bridge*, back into the bygone of a June day.

"Masses of soft clouds seemed floating in the blue sky as they did then; every wayside flower and shrub seemed glad that day. I was driving with a friend. The road he chose led straight on, and before us,—in the beyond,—sparkled in the sunlight the waters of a flowing river spanned by a bridge. 'We must cross it,' over and over I said; 'we must cross the bridge, for see, there is not a turn either to right or left.'—

"And my companion smiled, as nearer and nearer we came to what he playfully called, 'my bridge,'—but, lo! just as we approached it, not a rod off, a sudden turn, an opening between the sentinel

trees that guarded that roadway,—and,—we never crossed the bridge at all!—our way led through a shady lane, with one side all beauty in its wild tangle of June blossoms,—the other, only a narrow grass-grown pathway, that led close to the water's edge,—and oh, it was such 'still water'!—and the grass-blades that edged that wayside, they were such hinters of the 'green pastures.'”—

I need not give you, dear, the moral of this memory-picture of B.'s,—only let me bid you, when tired and oppressed by the 'perhaps,' the 'may-be' bridges that come in the train of illness, to recall your bygone glimpses of Nature, seeking their lessons, and never a doubt have I, but that you will find, as B. did, strength and help in these memory-pictures —help even not to cross the bridges before you come to them.—For "the entire visible world is a shadowing forth of the invisible things of God.— Its beauty is a wayside sacrament, full of a most real Presence."

But my letter, it has lengthened till it quite out-strips the bounds of an invalid's leaflet, hence I will keep for another day, the thoughts I want to give you on Gospel Pictures.

## GOSPEL PICTURES.

"CHRISTIAN faith is a grand cathedral with divinely-pictured windows. Standing *without*, you see no glory, nor can possibly imagine any. Standing *within*, every ray of light reveals a harmony of unspeakable splendor."



## GOSPEL PICTURES.

I PROMISED you a letter on Gospel Pictures, and sitting in the twilight yesterday, musing on what I should write, the thought came to me, Why not, in fulfillment of my promise, tell of a visit I made not long ago on Mrs. S.?

Dear old lady, ever since I first knew her the same patient soul has looked from her eyes, and yet she has been more than four years bedridden.

Think of it! four years,—in one sense doing nothing, in another so much,—for all that time she has been patiently *waiting* His will.

It was not a large room into which I was ushered ; it measured not more than twelve by fourteen feet. It was simply furnished ; an old-fashioned upright bureau, a straight high-back chair or two, a four-post bedstead with white hangings,—these were the chief articles.

It seemed a bit dreary to me, coming in as I did from the bright outdoor world of sunshine, yet

everything was so scrupulously neat, so pure and stainless, from the window-curtains and bed-hangings to the snowy coverlet, that it was a pleasant place to look upon, and softly I said to myself, "It is a white room."

Even the cluster of roses held in the quaint china vase on the mantel were white roses. The walls, too, that encompassed the little room were white walls, their smooth surface unbroken by portrait of husband or child, or painting of mountain or valley, river or lake.

And yet, when I said to Mrs. S., "Are you never lonely? Do you never want pictures to look at as you lie still day after day?" she answered, with a smile :

"Why, my friend, there is no end to the pictures I can see if I only lift my gaze *up*."

As I asked her what she meant, the smile that played over her face deepened, lighting it up, as sunbeams light up and play over meadow-lands at high noon of a midsummer's day, while the clasp of her hand which held mine grew firmer, as she replied :

"Do you want to know? Well, then, you must listen to an old woman's story,—the story of a commonplace life" (but she was mistaken in using these

last words,—for, is any life commonplace?) “for my days, they have come and gone pretty much like other people’s days, they tell their tale pretty much in the same words.”

And then Mrs. S. told the story of her youth and love, told of the time when she had walked hand-in-hand amid life’s joys and cares with her husband ; a time when, in her home, the patter of a child’s feet, the music of a child’s voice, had sounded,—and of the time when the little feet had grown weary, the little voice silent,—a time that was followed, only a year later, by a morning, since which the hand-clasp of a husband’s loving earthly companionship had been loosened,—a time, after which Mrs. S. left the home of her youth and joy, to dwell in that one room, the stainless white room in which I found her.

But I must not linger over the forepart of her tale, when it is the afterpart of which I want to tell you, because it is full, I think, of *heart-cheer, heart-help*, leading as it does to the pictures that are outlined for us in the *Book*, and which, if we look at them with childlike faith, will give us glimpses of Heavenly Love, as much more beautiful than earth-bound pictures as David’s Psalms and Isaiah’s poems are more beautiful than song of sweetest singer, in the kingdom of singers among men.

And now let us return to my questions to Mrs. S.

“Do you never grow weary? Does time never seem long to you? Do you never feel it hard that God keeps you for so many, many years away from the Heavenly home, where your husband and child were called so long ago?”

“No,—time,—it does not seem long,” the aged woman answered. “My days, they are not weary days. Sometimes I am a little tired, that is all; sometimes I can not help asking, ‘Open the door, dear Lord, open the door, and let me in soon.’”

And, if there had sounded the shadow of a sigh in my dear old friend’s voice, it melted and was gone, quickly as snow-flakes that fall on April days melt and vanish, as she continued :

“But it is not often I feel thus, I am content mostly to bide His time; but when the tired feeling does come, if I ask our Lord Christ, He is ever near to help me drive it away; and after the asking, sometimes it seems as though I heard His voice close beside me, saying :

“‘Look away from yourself,—look on My pictures.’

“And then, as I look, almost I seem to feel His Hand, the Hand of Christ, leading me among the Gospel pictures, and I see so many, as I told

you before, not an empty place is left upon my walls."

And again the beautiful smile, like sunshine, lit up the wrinkled, time-marked face, as I asked again, "What do you mean by seeing pictures? Tell me of them." And in Mrs. S.'s voice there thrilled a note tenderer even than the memory of the dearest human love had wakened, as she replied :

"Do you never think of the pictures Christ reveals to the soul?"

Then for awhile Mrs. S. was silent, till, half as though speaking to herself, she said : "It was not till I had learned of Christ, and His love, that I found beside every one of my own heart-pictures He places a picture too, towards which if I look, I find consolation ; and now when I fall into thinking of the past, when my heart is like to break with longing for my old home, I seem to hear a voice whispering the words, 'And every man went unto his own house, Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives,'— and, close beside the picture of my heart's loneliness, I see the picture held in those words. Looking at it, how can I complain, for it shows me, amid the shadows of the deepening night, a lonely, weary man toiling up the steep hill-side, while the valley is thronged with people,—people hastening to their

own homes, with no thought of the Christ, who, when night came, had not 'where to lay His head.' —Ah! how can we think of the homeless Christ and complain, whatever our lot may be?"

Presently, the old lady continued :

"And when memory lights up some hour of wandering, when I knew the right, and chose the wrong, and the hope in my heart is crushed by that memory, then, too, I hear a whisper of love, bidding me look away from my own wandering,—away to the picture of pitying forgiveness portrayed in the words, 'The Lord turned and looked on Peter.'—Think of *that look!*"

After these words, there was silence between us for awhile, then Mrs. S. said :

"Yet there do come to me hours when I see myself a sick, desolate old woman, and I know it is my Lord who leads my memory at such times to the verse of comfort, 'Now, there was leaning on Jesus' bosom that disciple whom Jesus loved'; and, as I look on that picture, I know it is Jesus' voice I hear whispering, 'You are tired, my old servant, tired,—lean on Me, and be rested,' and I know just as the well-beloved John leaned, so may I lean on Christ's bosom, and be at rest."

Not many more words did Mrs. S. add to her talk with me.

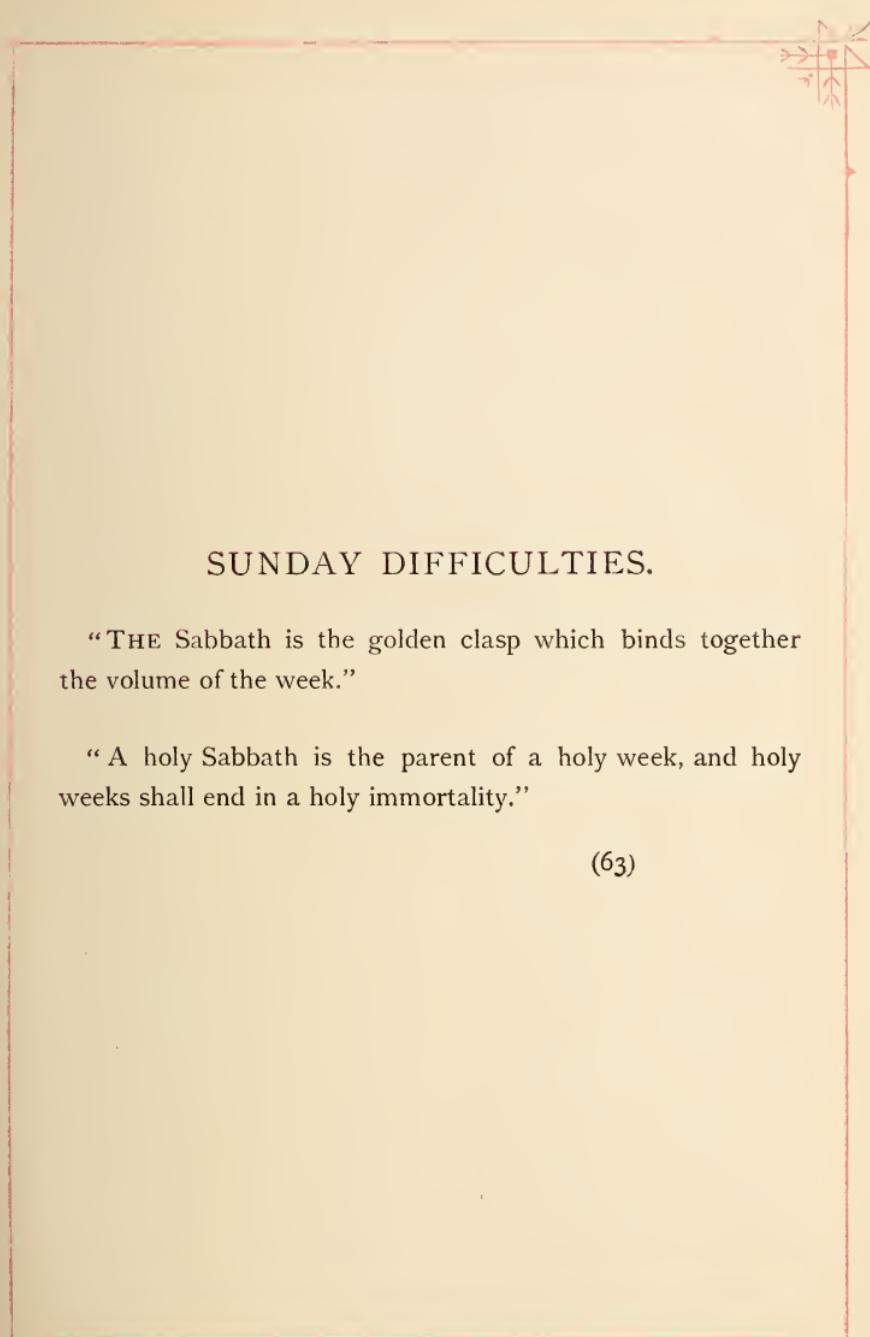
"For I have told you enough," she said, "for you to know why I am never lonely for long,—why, when sad memories come, I have but to look at the Gospel pictures, and there I always find cheer."

And, dear F., the door leading to this picture-gallery is open to you, too,—open wide, remember, if you but look with the eye of faith,—faith that will guide you, whatever your weariness, whatever your foreboding, to a picture of sympathy, of comfort,—for, are not the pictures Christ shows us in the Gospel records typical of His living sympathy and companionship?—

Do they not open far-reaching inlooks, even into the very heart of Infinite Love?

"Be still,  
And keep thy soul's large window pure,  
That so as life's appointment issueth,  
Thy vision may be clear."



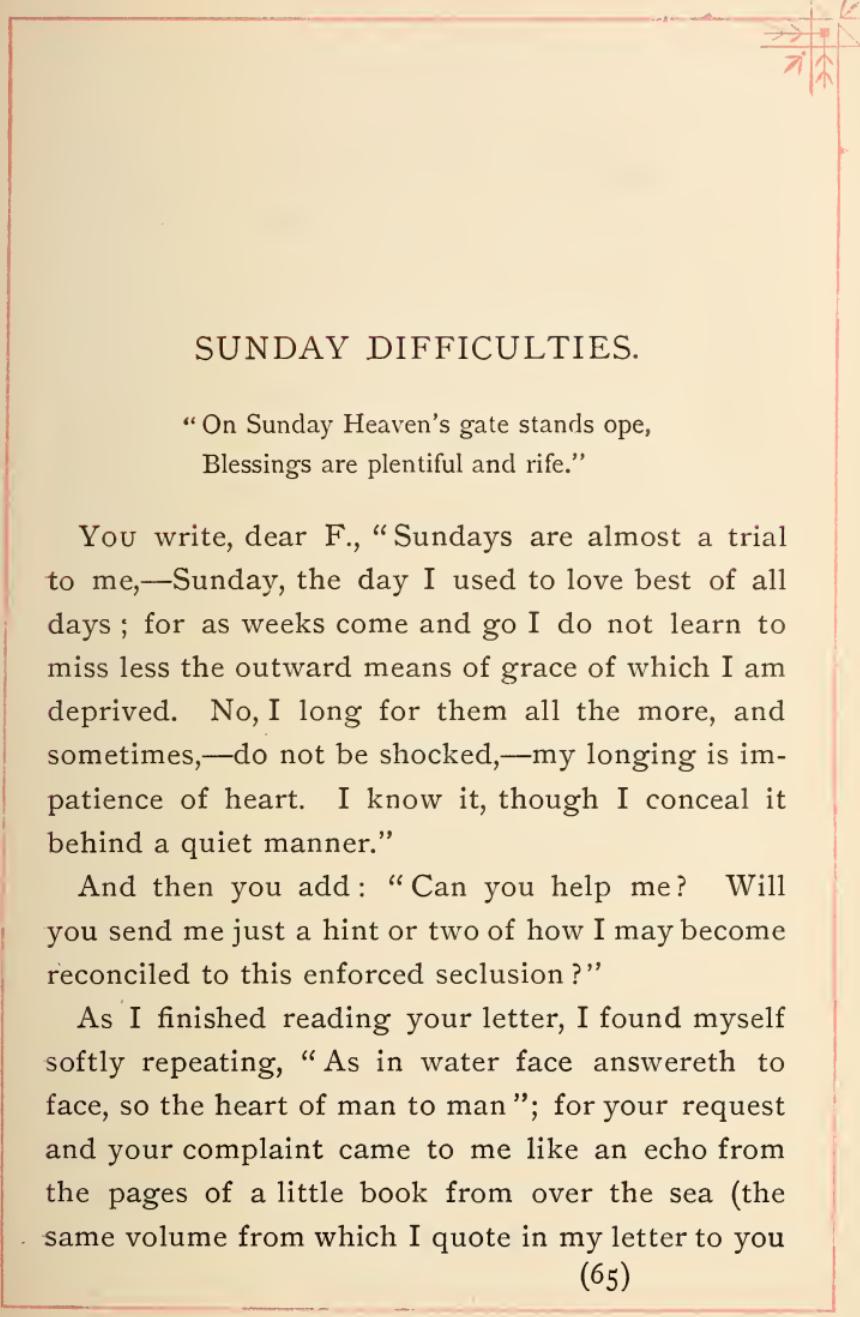


## SUNDAY DIFFICULTIES.

“THE Sabbath is the golden clasp which binds together the volume of the week.”

“A holy Sabbath is the parent of a holy week, and holy weeks shall end in a holy immortality.”





## SUNDAY DIFFICULTIES.

“On Sunday Heaven’s gate stands ope,  
Blessings are plentiful and rife.”

You write, dear F., “Sundays are almost a trial to me,—Sunday, the day I used to love best of all days ; for as weeks come and go I do not learn to miss less the outward means of grace of which I am deprived. No, I long for them all the more, and sometimes,—do not be shocked,—my longing is impatience of heart. I know it, though I conceal it behind a quiet manner.”

And then you add : “Can you help me? Will you send me just a hint or two of how I may become reconciled to this enforced seclusion ?”

As I finished reading your letter, I found myself softly repeating, “As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man”; for your request and your complaint came to me like an echo from the pages of a little book from over the sea (the same volume from which I quote in my letter to you

on work). I had been reading it only an hour before, finding in it words of cheer and help, addressed to one whose heart was shadowed, whose faith was a bit clouded, by much the same "Sunday difficulties" that oppress you, and verily I believe, thousands of invalids all our broad land over.

And now, just as when one walks through a meadow starred with flowers, they linger to gather here a bud and there a blossom, I turn again to the book, to cull and send you from its pages a flower-like thought or two, from this English sister's counsel to her invalid friend. She writes :

"I can better feel for your Sunday difficulties than I know how to aid them. They are helped much by prayer. Special asking brings special grace. Your High-Priest remembers the days of His flesh, and His spirit aids in double measure the worship which is compassed with infirmity. You grieve over your weakness, but does He judge you for what His own hand sends?"

How seldom we remember in our weary days of languor, or acute illness, this truth, that He sends it. He leads us, as it were, apart, even into the quiet of the sick-room. He says to us, "Sit still, my daughter," "Mary sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His words," "Take heed, and be quiet. Com-

mune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still."

Why not take these Bible words as the sweet heritage, the heavenly benediction of love, that rests on Sundays set apart to be spent in the seclusion of an invalid's room? "Sit still, my daughter!"

Ah! if we listened to the Voice saying thus to us, think you the seclusion would be irksome?—think you not we would hear, in the silence, the "still small voice" saying wondrous things?

It is said, "If prayer is the worship of the heart, meditation is that of the mind." And have you ever thought, that the two special blessings which seem to come as compensation to those debarred from joining in Church services on the Lord's day, are time for *meditation and contemplation*? Seek the difference between the two, and you will find thought enough to fill many a quiet Sunday hour. For meditation may be defined as "the pondering of the spirit on some Divine doctrine"; while contemplation is "the admiring gaze of the believing and worshipping heart on the glory of its Lord and King."

But, we are straying from our English friend's counsel.

"Variety," she tells us, "is a great preventive of

weariness." Specially, we would add, for those whose frames are worn by pain, who know wakeful nights and restless days, those whose sigh tells so well the invalid's story, "I am tired, so tired."

"Turn from one thing to another as often as you can, with little spaces between of absolute rest." Different subjects for prayer, different kinds of reading, she recommends, and, when there is strength for it, the making Sunday a day for special intercession.

Who can tell when the blessings fall what prayer besought them? Perchance the answer came in response to a petition offered in some darkened room, from some couch of pain, from some heart where the pulse of earthly life beat low, but where the soul soared high in nearness to God. This is such a wonderful, mysterious part of the lives of God's hidden ones, all shut away, as they seem, from ministries of love for His sake, they yet can offer the most effectual ministry of all,—the prayer of faith.

One more suggestion from the English book: "Sundays at home may be cheered by joining in spirit in the worship of others, and sometimes, when too weak for aught else, we can do this, for we can remember that we have our part in that petition

which shows such wonderful knowledge of the sufferer's need,—that God would give them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions."

There are many simple little books that come in very sweetly for such hours, tiny volumes of Bible promises, strung together, with a line or two of a hymn, a simple prayer and aspiration thought, they are often great helps when we can make no effort for ourselves, seeming like the chords of music that give forth only soothing strains of harmony, glints of sunbeams, culled from God's great volume of sunlight. Yet, however comforting these leaflets of suggestions are, we draw our buckets fullest of the cool, clear waters of refreshment when they come to us straight from the "wells of salvation," "the brook by the way," to which the Lord guides us, as He always does if we remember that when He sets us apart by illness, and we humbly submit and trust, He himself will minister unto us, will comfort us with the very comfort we most need.

"He will minister to you." I do not think Sunday will be lonely, will be a trial, if you remember that.

"Look up," and say it softly, and I think you will find God will lead you to the "inner church," where,

as a quaint German writer says, "He can serve up a better table than any preacher, and He will fill you if you are hungry," only remember, that hunger must be the hunger after righteousness.

And now do you tell me, I have done as I have done before, spoken only to the better part of your spiritual life, that I have left untouched the impatience of heart, the weariness, of which you complain, and, above all, your restless desire for activity of service?

One answer will reply, an answer I may repeat in well-nigh every letter I write, for the plaint of your words is as daily recurring to almost all invalids, as the dawning of morning light.

Have you not a service? are you not serving the Lord in a different way, but just as actively, as the one who is speeding from sunrise to sunset on errands of mercy? For, is not patience in sickness a terrible activity of the will? Think out that, and what the attainment of such patience means, and I think you will never complain again that you want service for the Lord. "Possess your soul in patience." Ah! we can not do that without bearing many a scar, many a bruise from the conflict, even though it be encompassed by the simple command comprised in "Lie still, my child, and wait, be patient, submit

thy will to God's will,"—a command that seems so easy, and yet that is so hard to obey.

And remember, too,

“Nor serve we only when we gird  
Our hearts for special ministry;  
That creature best has ministered,  
Which is what it was meant to be.

“Birds, by being glad, their Maker bless,  
By simply shining, sun and star,  
And we, whose law is love, serve less  
By what we do, than what we are.”

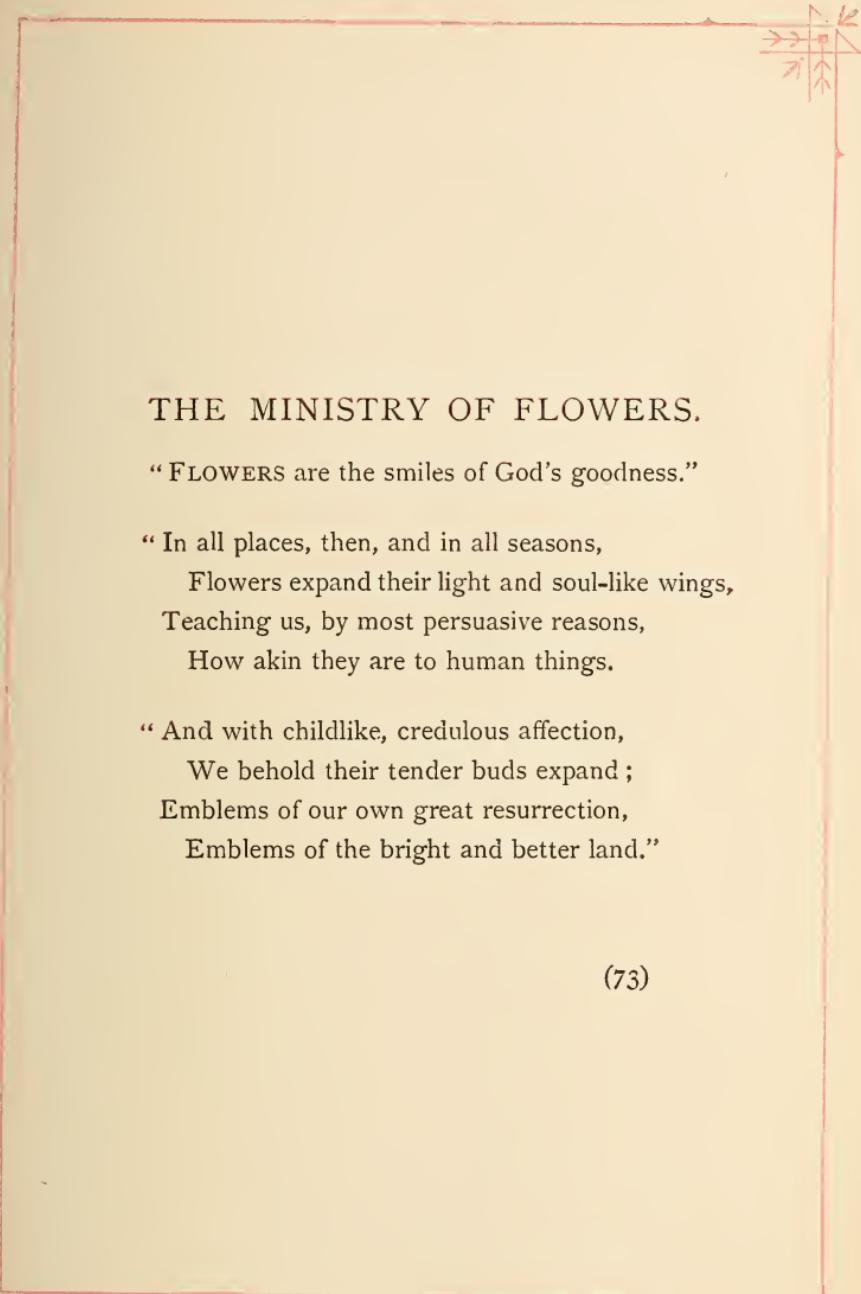
For farewell, I want to give you a thought from Bickersteth, that I think will help fill an hour of weariness. “I once tried,” he writes, “to call to my recollection all the happiest scenes of earth, and then, taking my Bible, looked to see whether they were used to prefigure the good things to come, and I found that in every case Holy Scripture had appropriated the figure.” I give you but one example,—a happy home,—“In my Father's house are many mansions,” for I want to copy for you, too, this “invalid's nosegay,” that drifted to me long ago. Do not look out the verses till next Sunday morning, and then remember that it is fitly named, for every

verse, like every flower, holds a fragrance of its own, and you know the odor of the flowers is so marked, even the blind can tell the sweetness of a rose from the perfume of a lily, the odor of a pink from the fragrance of a violet, just as the heart of faith knows the special dearness of the Bible words. So ponder them well, and then, when you are too weak to do more than faintly think of them, you will find their fragrance in your heart.

“AN INVALID’S NOSEGAY.”

“What aileth thee?” . . . .	Judges xviii. 24.
When sick . . . . .	John xi. 3; 2 Cor. v. 1.
When weary . . . . .	Isaiah xxxii. 2; Matthew xi. 28.
When weak . . . . .	Isaiah xl. 29; Isaiah xxvi. 4.
When oppressed . . . . .	Isaiah xxxviii. 14; Psalm lv. 22.
When tempted . . . . .	Isaiah i. 16; 1 Cor. x. 13.
When apprehensive of judgment . . . . .	Romans viii. 31-34; Psalm ciii. 13, 14; 2 Tim. iv. 8.

Ponder each, and tie all up with Faith.



## THE MINISTRY OF FLOWERS.

“FLOWERS are the smiles of God’s goodness.”

“ In all places, then, and in all seasons,  
Flowers expand their light and soul-like wings,  
Teaching us, by most persuasive reasons,  
How akin they are to human things.

“ And with childlike, credulous affection,  
We behold their tender buds expand ;  
Emblems of our own great resurrection,  
Emblems of the bright and better land.”





## THE MINISTRY OF FLOWERS.

“ In the bright flowerets  
Stand the revelation of God’s love.”

I OFTEN wonder if those who send flowers into sick-rooms fully realize the beautiful mission of their gifts.—I might almost say sacred mission, for verily flowers always bring with them something more than their own beauty and fragrance,—that precious something that speaks of the all-pervading love of Him who considered the “lilies of the field.”

Yet while I say “always bring,” I find myself questioning,—Do you find all the pleasure and profit you might, dear F., blossoming out of the fair blooms that kind friends send to brighten your room with beauty and fragrance?

Querying thus, I send you a page from the experience of Emily Mills (my invalid neighbor), believing, as I do, that those who know weariness and languor, best know how to hint heart-cheer and diversion of thought to the weary and languid.

Emily has been an invalid for many months; sea-

son has followed season, and still she is shut away from the glad outer world of sunshine and blooming flowers.

But though for herself she can gather neither violet or lily-bell, many are the kind hearts that remember her, many the willing hands that bring from woodland, meadow, and garden, fair blossoms to make glad her quiet room.

Thus, on the table by her lounge stand vases, holding not only rare blooms, but wild flowers, too.

“I find so much pleasure in them,” she said, adding, with a smile :

“Do you ever think how almost every one is freighted with some tender association, linking it to the common name by which we now call it,—if so fair a thing as one of God’s flowers can be called common ! Think,” she continued, “how even the tiny blue-eyed forget-me-not asserts a claim to its title, that dates backward far into the years.”

Then playfully she told the simple story of the naming of the blue flower, that every summer-tide sings its song to some one, murmuring,

“Forget me not, forget me not.”

A dear, request-ladened murmur, for so sweet a

thing it is to be remembered by those we love, and those who love us.

So sweet, so dear a thing, truly much of life's discipline it takes, before we become reconciled to the words of Scotland's poet :

“Only remembered by what I have done.”

For somehow, we do want to be remembered, not so much by what we “*do*,” as by what we “*are*.”

And yet, are they not both one,—for is not what we *do*, the outgrowth of what we *are*?

Emily spoke, too, of the peaceful thoughts that cluster about the pansy violet, which in England they call the Heart's-ease, revealing, by the name, “the close connection between tender human feeling and this flower,” toward which even men of science have a touch of poetry.

“For they will not call a pansy a pansy, but they call it *viola tricolor*, and some of them have even fancied *viola* came from the heifer Io, which fed on violets and golden-leaved flowers of the mead.”

But Emily's words had most of meaning to me, as I think they will to you, when she said :

“I find a double pleasure, too, smiling from flowers, when I link them with some thought or song

of the poets, for then, when they fade, I have still the song to sing in my heart."

And her eyes rested lovingly on the "poet's corner" of her well-laden book-shelves, as she added :

"The songs I find are, many of them, so full of comfort and sweetness when I am tired, they breathe refreshment to me, like the breath of June wind that blows from over gardens of roses and lilies."

By way of illustration, I cull and send you, as a faint hint of this double flower-pleasure, a poet's song or two, brought to memory by the blossoms on which my eyes fall, as I lift them from my paper.

There are violets on my table, reminding that

"God does not send us strange flowers every year";

and a knot of carnations, red and white, which straightway bring to mind the sacred verses :

" Red, red as the blood  
That poured its crimson tide  
From the heart that bled and broke for us,  
From our Saviour's riven side :  
The blood that made our peace,  
That washed away our stains,  
That bought for tried and weary hearts  
The Rest that aye remains.



“ White, white as the soul  
That is washed in the cleansing tide,  
Clothed in Christ’s robe of Righteousness,  
Sanctified, justified ;  
Breathing the fragrance sweet  
Of a pure and spotless life,  
To Him who won us, to Him who crowns  
The victors in the strife.

“ Beautiful, fragrant bloom  
On a warped, unsightly tree,  
All the beauty in Thee, O Christ !  
The ugliness in me ;  
Wonderful, wonderful Lord !  
Who died for these souls of ours ;  
And then, to melt our hearts with love,  
Tells us the tale in flowers.”

But I must not bind a garland of flower-songs for you.—For is not half the pleasure of pleasure found in the winning it by one’s own effort ?

And yet I would fain whisper, as you seek them, remember,

“ The Lilies say, ‘ O, trust Him !  
We neither toil nor spin,  
And yet His house of beauty  
See how we enter in.’ —

While—

“ ‘His word is like to honey,’  
The clover testifies,  
‘ And all who trust His promise  
Shall in His love abide.’

“ And let us ‘follow Jesus,’  
The star of Bethlehem says,  
While all the band of flowers  
Bend down with reverent head.

“ The glad sunflower answering,  
And little daisies bright,  
And all the cousin asters  
‘We follow to the light.’

And—

“ ‘Hosanna in the highest,’  
The baby bluets sing ;  
And little trembling harebells  
With softest music ring.—

“ ‘The winter hath been bitter,  
But sunshine follows storm :  
Thanks for His loving-kindness,  
The earth’s great heart is warm.

“ ‘Thank God for every weather,—  
The sunshine and the wet,’  
Speak out the cheery pansies,  
And darling mignonette.”

You hardly need to be reminded, dear F., that you can find these songs in poets' pages from Chaucer on to the present time.

As, led by them, you tread the flower-strewn pathway that leads down through the years to the open gate of *now*, do not forget to tarry awhile amid the blossoms of Shakespeare's garden,

"Wherein the wild thyme blows,  
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,  
Quite overshadowed with luscious woodbine,  
With sweet musk roses, and with eglantine,"

and you may gather there a hand full, perchance a heart full, too, of Shakespeare's own flowers, "pan-sies for thought, rosemary for remembrance, blue-veined violets, columbines, and many more."

Linger, too, among the haunts Wordsworth loved so well, where the primroses and the daisies grew so thick and fair,—the humble flowers of which he wrote :

" 'Tis my faith that every flower  
Enjoys the air it breathes."

But let your longest tarrying-place date far back of these earth-learned songs,—back even to the suggestive thoughts and symbolisms that blossom out of Bible-mentioned flowers.

You will catch my meaning if you but follow the path pointed to by Aaron's rod which budded, "and brought forth buds and bloomed blossoms" (Numbers xvii. 8).

I learned the other day such a sweet fact regarding this almond bloom.

"It blossoms in January, long before all other vegetation, and the Jews call it 'The Waker,'—'Awake,'—or 'Watchful,' according as you interpret its name. It was their *arbor vitae*, as it were, and hence the seven-branched candlestick was made like an almond-tree, and this is why God showed Jeremiah (i. 11) an almond-rod."

You will think, too, of the Galilean hill-slopes, where grew *the lilies*,—for it is in pondering them you will find the truest, most heart-full comfort-lessons the flowers teach.

Those lilies! the thought of which leads me to seal my letter with old Luther's seal, "God writes the Gospel, not in the Bible alone, but on trees and flowers."

HEART TO HEART.

“CHRISTIANS are like the several flowers in a garden, they have each of them the dew of heaven, which being shaken with the wind, they let fall at each other’s roots, whereby they are jointly nourished, and become nourishers of each other.”

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## HEART TO HEART.

OFTEN in hours of weakness, when able to "take in" but a brief sentence or two, I have found comfort from remembering one or another of the restfull, tender utterances by which heart speaks to heart, and I think you may, too ; and so I propose sending you, in place of a letter, a garland woven of these "comfort-thoughts," among which there is naught of my own save the culling.

"An emblem," says Quarles, "is a silent parable," and you know my fondness for symbols and types, so will not wonder at my sending you thoughts in suggestion, pictures, as it were, in outline, for you to fill up with meanings to meet your own special needs.

Here is one :

"There is a classic story, that a fire once ran over the Pyrenean mountains, destroying all the vineyards of the inhabitants.—But—as the villagers mourned for their vines, they discovered that the

fire which had destroyed their grapes had opened, by its heat, deep fissures in the rocks, through which gleamed rich veins of silver!"

I sometimes have thought we let slip from us the significance of many a story like the above, historical, classical, and scriptural too, from the mistaken fear that there may be something fanciful, and perchance unreal in seeking to know the meaning of the lines,

"Two worlds are ours, 'tis only sin  
Forbids us to descry  
The mystic heaven and earth within,  
Plain as the sea and sky."

I say mistaken fear, for surely it must be uplifting to heart and mind to thus seek the twofold, for in doing it, we follow the "pattern set in the Mount."

Think how "God taught Israel by symbols, all of which pointed to Christ and His kingdom, and hence became typical."

It is Adolphe Saphir who writes: "How much the mind of the deepest and most spiritual believer dwells on symbols and types, is seen by the fact of the Gospel of John containing more references to the symbols of Scripture than any other portion of the Word."

When you are strong enough, look them out, for they lead through pleasant paths. By way of a sign-post, I point you to a few of them : "Observe the symbol of the light, of servant and son, chapter 8th ; in chapter 10th, the parables of the door, the sheep-fold, the hireling, the shepherd, the twofold flock ; chapter 11th, resurrection, the spiritual and the real ; chapter 12th, the great parable of the corn of wheat ; chapters 14th and 16th, the Father's house with many mansions, the vine, the Friend laying down his life, and the friends treated with confidence."

But I must return to the thought bits, the green pastures I promised you.

I will begin by Mrs. Tate's (have you read her memoir?) "comfort-text," for it is verily an invalid's promise.

"Who is among you that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and *stay* upon his God."

Remember,—"A trustful heart strengthens to the last ; and to the last we will trust,—and to us joys shall be the will of God, and so shall pains and sorrows be,—and, no less than birth, death shall be His will ; and in it we will rejoice always, though sometimes, perhaps, not without trembling."

And yet,

“The unknown, which men call Heaven, is close  
behind this visible scene of things.”

“Death is another life. We bow our heads  
At going out, we think, and enter straight  
Another golden chamber of the King’s,  
Larger than this we leave, and lovelier.”

Robertson says :

“We are conquerors of death, when we are able to  
look beyond it.”

Think of that *Beyond!*—

“There thou shalt walk in soft, white light, with kings and  
priests abroad,  
And thou shalt summer high in bliss upon the hills of God.”

Old Luther writes :

“He is the God, not of the dead, but of the living.  
Therefore it is impossible that the good should alto-  
gether die. They must live eternally—otherwise  
God would not be their God.”

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is  
thy victory? The sting of death *is* sin—but thanks  
*be* to God, which giveth us the victory, through our  
Lord Jesus Christ.”

“ Let the angel take thy hand,  
And lead thee up the misty stair ;  
And then with beating heart await  
The opening of the Golden Gate.”

“ The greater the faith and patience that God’s servants manifest, the more evident the work of His Spirit.”

“ The grace of patience !—It is well to have grace of stillness that comes like dew, and sinks to the roots of all that is within us.”

“ Strengthless, helpless, what must I do? Do nothing. Have patience ! Take it from the God of Patience, who gives it to His distressed children, and wait ! ”

“ The hardest lesson of strength,”—“ Their strength is to *sit still* ” (Isaiah xxx. 7).

And what then?—Why, the learning the full meaning of that verse, Col. i. 11, “ Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness.”

Let no one expect dying grace until he needs to

use it, until he is dying. "As thy day,—thy need,—so shall thy strength be."

"Teach us to wait until Thou shalt appear—  
To know that all Thy ways and times are just ;  
Thou seest that we do believe and fear ;  
Lord, make us also to believe and trust!"

"The *fellowship* of our Lord's suffering."—Have you dwelt in hours of pain on that thought?

"Why does Saint Paul so rejoice, so delight himself in weakness, in affliction, but because he knows that *without these* he can attain to no close intimacy with his beloved Lord."

"I took," said Luther, "for the symbol of my theology a seal, on which I had engraven a cross, with a heart in its center ; the cross is black, to indicate the sorrows through which the Christian must pass, but the heart preserves its natural color, for the cross does not extinguish nature, but gives life.—The heart is placed in the midst of a white rose, which signifies the joy, peace, and consolation that faith gives ; but the rose is white, and not red, because it is not the joy and peace of the world, but that of spirits."

Remember,—“It is to the cross that the heart must turn for that which will reconcile it to sorrow, sickness, and weariness.”

“What else can rock the waves of the soul to rest but the Voice of Him who, at the fourth watch of the night, when the darkness is deepest, comes, saying, ‘Fear not, it is I; be not afraid !’”

Do you tell me I began my letter by saying I would give you brief sentences of cheer, and, instead, I am sending well-nigh pages of thought?

If thus you say, call these lengthened extracts the roses and the sunflowers, the hollyhocks and stately lilies of my garland, which, for conclusion, I will intertwine with flowers of smaller size, but not of less beauty and fragrance.—So find, in these last cullings, violets and heart’s-ease, snowdrops and crocuses, primroses and daisies, cowslips and myrtles.

“Heaven is for those who think of it.”

“God illuminates those who think often of Him, and who lift their eyes toward Him.”

“God’s comforts are always greater than our troubles.”

“Life rests in the hand of God, and He is able to help us out of all distress, however great and deep.”

Remember, “He has graven thee upon the palms of His Hands.”

“Peace and quiet even can dwell with pain.”

“If you are ‘in Christ’ you are in a fortress, and God’s own Peace,—the gentlest of sentries,—keeps watch and ward at the gates of this all-glorious stronghold.”

“The Lord has His sick ones,—and He often chastens with sickness *just because* He loves.”

“Think of Him who loves thee, who loved thee *into* this sickness, and will love thee *through* it.”

“O Way, through which our souls draw near  
To yon eternal Home of Peace,  
Where perfect love shall cast out fear,  
And earth’s vain toil and wanderings cease;  
In strength or weakness may we see  
Our heavenward path, O Lord, through Thee.”



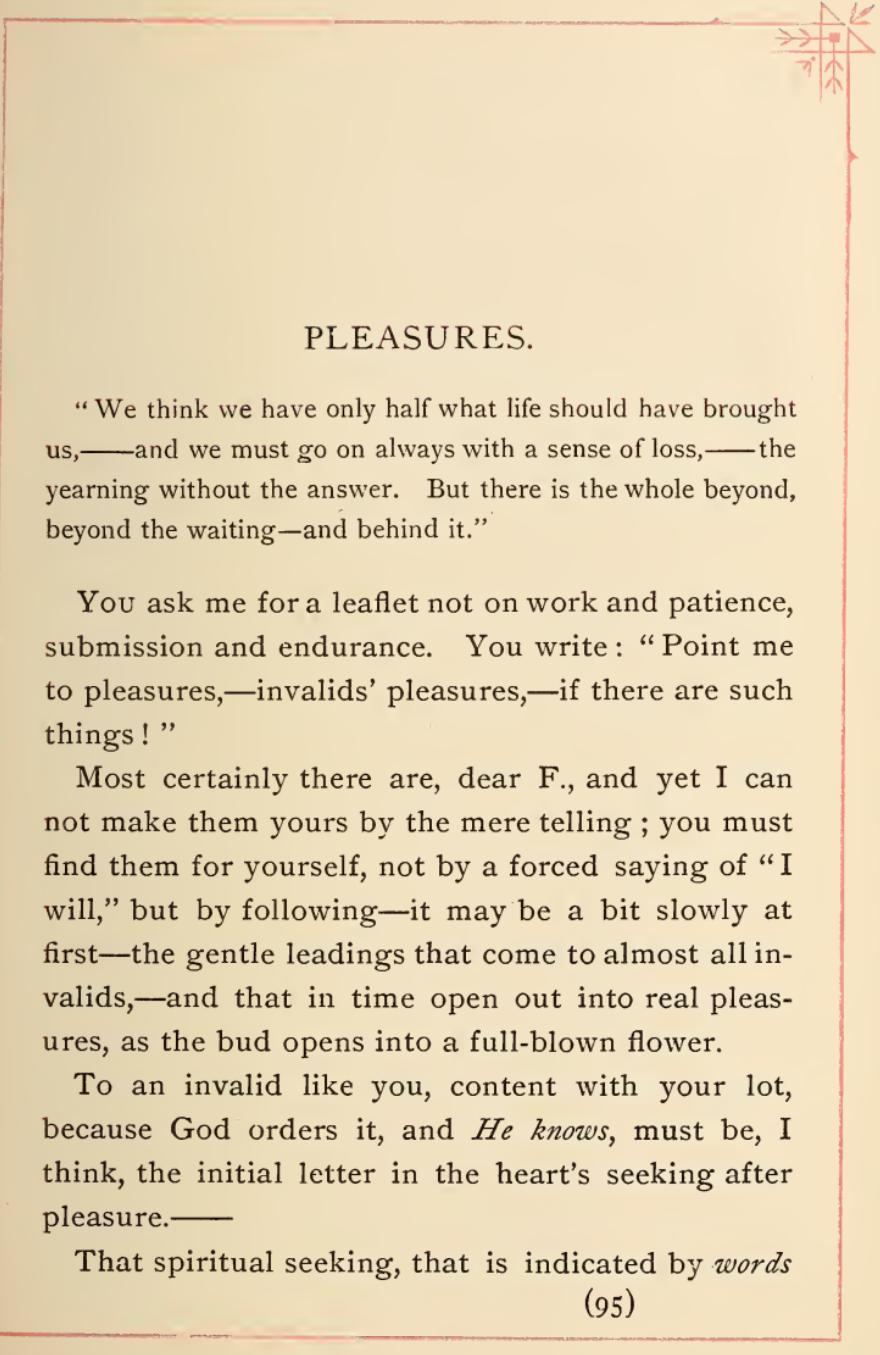
## PLEASURES.

“ GOD gives us happiness through ourselves ; we are made happy by what we *are*, not by what we *have*.”

“ Joy is the sign and ornament of gratitude,—faith without joy is an altar without incense.”

“ The sorrow which God appoints is purifying and ennobling, and contains within it a serious joy.”





## PLEASURES.

“We think we have only half what life should have brought us,—and we must go on always with a sense of loss,—the yearning without the answer. But there is the whole beyond, beyond the waiting—and behind it.”

You ask me for a leaflet not on work and patience, submission and endurance. You write: “Point me to pleasures,—invalids’ pleasures,—if there are such things ! ”

Most certainly there are, dear F., and yet I can not make them yours by the mere telling ; you must find them for yourself, not by a forced saying of “I will,” but by following—it may be a bit slowly at first—the gentle leadings that come to almost all invalids,—and that in time open out into real pleasures, as the bud opens into a full-blown flower.

To an invalid like you, content with your lot, because God orders it, and *He knows*, must be, I think, the initial letter in the heart’s seeking after pleasure.—

That spiritual seeking, that is indicated by *words*  
(95)

full of meaning, rather than single consonants and vowels.

*Content*,—yes, surely, it is the key-note of pleasure ; but it is not so much of the deeper spiritual experiences, I think, you want me to tell, as of what may be termed surface pleasures, the surroundings which, like the atmosphere, enfold our days.

Not long ago, I came across a practical thought on this daily content, which I send you ; for, though, on first reading you may shake your head in disagreement, as you recall your feeble strength, and contrast it with your friend's vigor, your days of seclusion and apparent uselessness, contrasted with her busy hours of social life and active employment, —that twin sister to enjoyment,—I think, after all, you will in the end assent to it.

—“Perhaps it is the surest road to content to look at those who are more happy than oneself, and consider if what makes them so happy, would make oneself equally so.—I believe the honest answer would be, No.”

—And I believe so, too, for I believe we all, if we allow ourselves to believe and recognize it, have blessings in our lives, however full of pain and disappointed hopes they may be, that make us ready to say, we would not change with another, if we had

to give up *all*,—for as every heart knoweth its own bitterness, so every heart knoweth its own joys and comforts.

But to feel thus, one must let go *self*-pity, which is such a persistent companion in an invalid's life, so intrusive and subtle, that it finds its way into the heart, quicker, even, than a sunbeam finds entrance through a half-drawn blind.

And now, the hint or two, for which you ask. First,—remember, much of your present enjoyment must be by proxy.

This may seem hard, but if you try, you will soon learn the secret of being happy in the enjoyment of others, and it is a pleasure that spreads, till it embraces a neighbor's joy as something for oneself, till sitting by an open window and catching the voices of children at play brings a smile; but, as to enumerating the pleasures thus open to an invalid,—*because*,—it is such a happy thing to know of happiness,—why, I can not, they are so many.

This thought is tenderly expressed in George Eliot's words :

“It makes a large part of one's calm and comfort in this difficult world, to think of the lots of those we know, as free from any hard pangs of either sorrow, or bodily pain.”



Another pleasure I call peculiarly an invalid's, is the intimate learning of the good, the sweet kindness, that is so universal, and that shines out so tenderly toward the sick and suffering,—a sacred pleasure this, because surely it is a sign of Him, who made "man in His own likeness"—a sign revealed to none so often, I think, as to invalids.

"Pity called akin to Love"—and God is Love. Truly it is oftentimes like an Alpine flower, a blossom out of the snow that we call cold, as it blooms in deed of kindness, from hearts that have seemed stern, and indifferent, till touched by its sunbeam.

Why, I could fill pages with tender recollections, homely prose poems, of the kindness that I have known spring into warmth of action, and sympathy, —because,—"she is sick."

Rich and poor, learned and unlearned, all respond to that plea.

But hints, they are all I mean to give you, for I repeat, the heart must be its own sunshine maker, its own pleasure finder, and you, dear F., will, I know, not be backward in finding rifts in the clouds that oppress you, even though just now, in your hours of pain and weakness, you catch mere glints of brightness, in place of full noonday light.

Only hints, I said, and yet, I can not say farewell without adding one word on the dearest pleasure of all, most sacred among them, the holy privilege of prayer. I can not whisper good-bye, without adding, "Do not forget, dear, in your seeking for cheer, for these days of illness,—that at the best must know hours of weariness and longing,—the bow of promise, with which you, and all invalids may span *the now*."

The beautiful promise, verily woven of rainbow colors, sunshine on tears. The promise of the *There*, where in "God's presence is fullness of joy, at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. xvi. 11).

I almost hear you say :

"It is easy to write thus, but so hard to *live* it."

Yes, dear, I know,—I know it is easy to preach, hard to practice, but I think it will be easier, if "instead of asking Jesus to help you do it,—you ask Him to *do it for you*."

For,—only "He can write straight on crooked lines."





## INVALIDS' PILLOWS.

“REST, weary heart !  
From all thy silent griefs and secret pain,  
Thy profitless regrets and longings vain ;  
Wisdom and love have ordered all the past,  
All shall be blessedness and light at last ;  
Cast off the cares that have so long oppressed, —  
Rest, sweetly rest !”

“Under His wings shalt thou trust.”



## INVALIDS' PILLOWS.

“God is Love.—A soft pillow, that, on which to repose.”

“*He giveth His Beloved sleep.*”

*H*ope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast (Heb. vi. 19).

*E*ven Jesus.—(Heb. vi. 20).

*G*od hath comforted His people, and will have mercy upon His afflicted (Isaiah xlix. 13).

*I* the Lord hath called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee (Isaiah xlvi. 6).

*V*erily, verily, I say unto you, he that *believeth* on Me, hath everlasting life (John vi. 47).

*E*ven every one that is called by My name (Isaiah xlvi. 7).

*T*he eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms (Deut. xxxiii. 27).

*H*e will swallow up death in victory, and will wipe away tears (Isaiah xxv. 8).

*H*e healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds (Psalm cxlvii. 3).

*I* know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord,—thoughts of peace (Jer. xxix. 11).

*S*urely He shall deliver thee,—Thou shalt not be afraid (Psalm xcii. 3, 5).

*B*ehold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy, to deliver their soul from death (Psalm xxxiii. 18, 19).

*E*ven the heat, with the shadow of a cloud, shall be brought low (Isaiah xxv. 5).

*L*et us hold fast the profession of our faith—for He is faithful that promised (Heb. x. 23).

*O* the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God (Rom. xi. 33).

*V*ain is the help of man; through God we shall do valiantly (Psalm lx. 11).

*E*ye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him (1 Cor. ii. 9).

*D*eath is swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. xv. 54).



*S*o shall we ever be with the Lord (1 Thess. iv. 17).

*L*et not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid (John xiv. 27).

*E*ver, O Lord, Thy word is settled in Heaven, Thy faithfulness is unto all generations (Psalm cxix. 89, 90).

*E*ven eternal life (1 John ii. 25).

*P*eace, be still (Mark iv. 39).

“ We know that never a creature in pain  
Addressed a prayer to God’s mercy in vain.  
Time has no line that His hand may not smooth,  
Life has no grief that His love can not soothe ;  
And the fevered brow shall have rest at last ;  
In the healing shade from the death-cross cast.  
*Look up ! . . . . Why shouldest thou weep ?*  
The Lord giveth aye to His loved ones sleep.”











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